

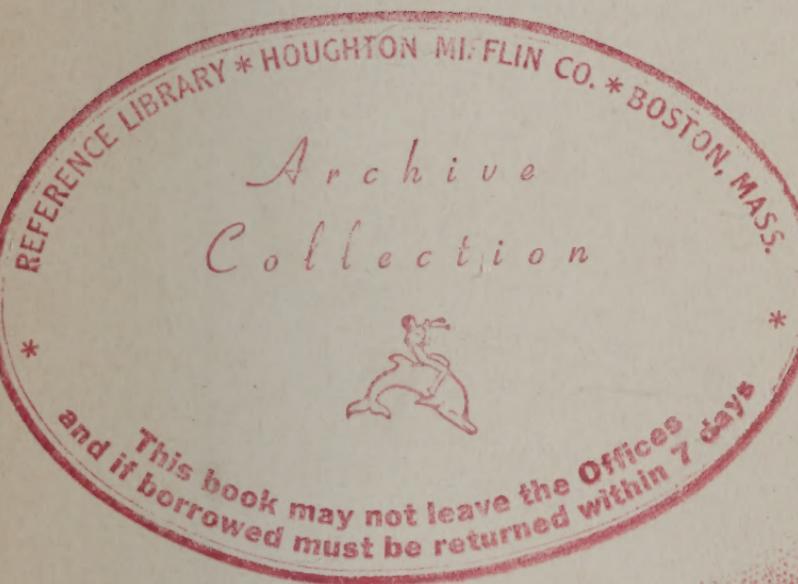


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1700 MILES
IN OPEN BOATS

Frontispiece.



CAPTAIN CECIL P. T. FOSTER

1700 MILES IN OPEN BOATS

THE STORY OF THE LOSS OF THE
S.S. TREVESSA IN THE INDIAN
OCEAN, AND THE VOYAGE
OF HER BOATS TO
SAFETY

BY CECIL FOSTER, MASTER MARINER
Captain of the s.s. "Trevessa"



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DEDICATED
TO MY WIFE

PREFACE

THE story of the voyage of the "Trevessa's" boats here set down is based, in the first instance, on the log which I kept in a small pocket book. It was written up from day to day in pencil, and parts of it were almost illegible by the time I reached Rodriguez Island, owing to the continual soaking that it had to undergo ; but I made a copy in ink on my arrival there, and the log printed is as it was originally written.

Mr. Smith kept a similar log for a part of the period of his voyage in No. 3 boat.

These two logs are printed at the beginning of the record of the days to which they refer, with a wider margin than the rest of the page, so that they are easily distinguishable.

They are supplemented by notes of what I myself have been able to remember and what others have recalled to my memory when we have been discussing our experience.

It has not been an easy task to put down what was needed to make a complete narrative, for my recollection of details of what happened during the boat voyage is not complete. Incidents and details have come back to me only gradually, as I have written or dictated to my wife, but then with extraordinary vividness. What is now set down is as accurate as I can make it, but possibly there are some incidents which have quite escaped my memory.

My thanks are due to Mr. J. R. Taylor, Mr. and Mrs. Leslie Smith and Mr. Newcombe of Rodriguez Island, Mr. Barretti of Mauritius and Mr. Mallyon of Port Pirie for permission to use their photographs as illustrations, and to the Hain Steamship Company for placing at my disposal the chart which was used in No. 3 boat and those prepared for the Board of Trade Inquiry. The large chart published in this book is prepared from them.

CECIL FOSTER.

BARRY, *July, 1924.*

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I

THE OUTWARD VOYAGE

THE s.s. "Trevessa" was a steel single screw steamer of 3121 tons net register and 5004 tons gross, and would carry a total of 7735 tons cargo and bunkers on a draught of 25 feet 2 inches. Her length was 401 feet, beam 53 feet, and depth 28 feet. She was built in 1909 at Flensburg, Germany, for the German Hansa Line, and was named "Imkenturm." Her employment while with the Hansa Line was in the East Indian trade, and throughout the war she was interned at Sourabaya in the Dutch East Indies. She was taken over by the Shipping Controller in August 1919 and sold in October 1920 to the Hain Steamship Co. of St. Ives, Cornwall, for £86,000. Her engines were quadruple expansion, built by the Flensburger Schiffbau Gesellschaft, of 475 nominal horse power, and working up to 2500-2600 indicated horse power. The wireless installation was German Telefunken. She was schooner rigged, and her speed under good conditions in smooth water was 10½ to 11 knots.

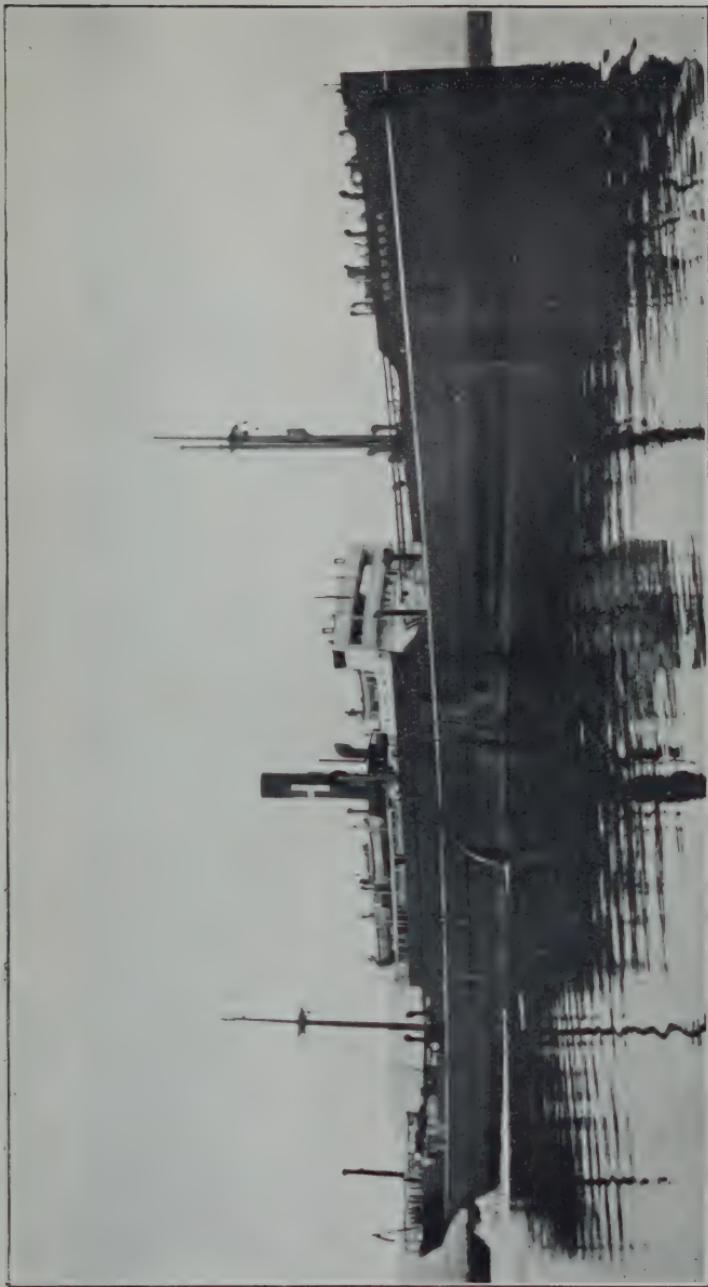
Aft of the high forecastle, between it and the bridge, was the forward well deck with high iron bulwarks. Between the engineers' quarters and the poop was the

after well deck without solid bulwarks but with open railings.

There were six holds capable of carrying about 7000 tons of cargo. The hatchways for these holds were, Nos. 1 and 2 on the fore well deck, No. 3 abaft the bridge, Nos. 4 and 5 on the after well deck, and No. 6 on the poop, and the ship was divided into seven watertight compartments by means of steel bulkheads. The first one was the collision bulkhead at the forward end of No. 1 hold, the next was between No. 1 and No. 2 holds, the third and fourth enclosed the engine-room and stokehold spaces, the fifth was between No. 4 and No. 5 holds, and the sixth between Nos. 5 and 6 holds.

The master, officers and chief steward were accommodated in the house under the bridge. The accommodation for the engineers, apprentices, stewards and cooks was at the after end of the same deck, and for the wireless operator at the after end of the boat deck. The petty officers, sailors and firemen were quartered forward, the boatswain, carpenter and sailors on the starboard side, and the donkeyman and firemen on the port side. On the lower bridge was the chart room and hospital, and the ship was fitted out very completely with the conveniences for a modern cargo steamer, *e.g.* steam heaters, electric light and fans throughout, etc.

The boats carried were four Class I. lifeboats, two on each side of the boat deck, and two Class III. boats, one each side of the bridge. The six boats which were on board the "Trevessa" when she foundered were new British built wooden boats, put on board when the Hain



S.S. "TREVESSA" AT PORT PIRIE

Steamship Co. took her over, to replace the German steel built boats which were then aboard. Full details of the boats are given in the chapter devoted to the boats and their equipment.

When the "Trevessa" was taken over by the Shipping Controller she was dry docked at Singapore, granted a temporary load line, and proceeded to the United Kingdom. On her arrival at Leith, in December, 1919, she was again dry docked, and when purchased by the Hain Steamship Company she was fully surveyed and re-conditioned, £36,000 being spent on her. In January 1921 a special survey classification A1 100 was granted. She was dry docked again in December 1922, before proceeding on her last voyage, and everything had been done to keep her up to the highest standard of safety.

While the ship was interned at Sourabaya during the war she had been well looked after above the water line, but below the water line some kind of shell-fish had attached itself to the surface of the plates, and a discharge from these shell-fish had caused corrosion. In some cases the marks made by the corrosion looked as though someone had begun to drill a hole through the plate $\frac{5}{8}$ to $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter, but had stopped before the plate was pierced.

Where many marks of this sort were in existence on a plate, that plate was replaced when the ship was being re-conditioned; in other cases the mark was drilled out and a rivet inserted, so that there should be no danger of a weak spot in any plate caused by the corrosion, and the ship when she put to sea was as sound as she could be made.

The following is a full list of her officers and crew :

	Name.	Rating.	Nationality.	Age.
1.	Cecil P. T. Foster -	Master	British	36
2.	James C. Stewart Smith	1st Officer	"	41
3.	Richard H. Hall -	2nd "	"	—
4.	Arthur Tippett -	3rd "	"	20
5.	Donald Lamont -	Wireless Operator	"	—
6.	Norman V. Robson -	1st Engineer	"	38
7.	David J. Mordecai -	2nd "	"	—
8.	Thomas K. Fair -	3rd "	"	—
9.	James B. Edwards -	4th "	"	—
10.	Douglas James Bell -	Apprentice	"	—
11.	Henry E. Sparks -	"	"	—
12.	Charles Seaborn -	"	"	—
13.	Eric W. T. Goddard -	"	"	—
14.	Ralph W. Flynn -	"	"	—
15.	Robert H. James -	Chief Steward	"	—
16.	Wm. E. Sturt -	Asst.	"	—
17.	Kenneth J. M'Kenzie	Messroom	"	—
18.	Wm. S. Allchin -	Ship's Cook	"	29
19.	Wm. Barton -	Asst.	"	—
20.	Albert C. Sumner -	Bo'sun	"	—
21.	Edward M'Parlin -	Carpenter	"	32
22.	Michael Scully -	A.B.	"	62
23.	James M'Green -	"	"	—
24.	Thomas M'Gee -	"	"	—
25.	Philip G. Burke -	"	"	—
26.	Gordon Lister -	"	"	—
27.	A. G. Wolley -	"	"	23
28.	Richard Jones -	"	"	—
29.	Robert Wilson -	Donkeyman	"	—
30.	George Stainton -	Greaser	"	—
31.	Charles Bainbridge -	Fireman	"	—
32.	Karl Brink -	"	Swede	—
33.	Joe Baptiste -	Donkeyman	Singapore	—
34.	Hassan Khan -	Fireman	Burmese	—
	(alias Tom Patchoo)			

THE CREW

5

Name.	Rating.	Nationality.	Age.
35. Mount Lee - -	Fireman	Burmese	—
36. Mussim Nagi - -	„	Arab	57
37. Ali Nagi - -	„	„	—
38. John Lopez - -	„	West African Cape Verde Is.	—
39. Thomas Gomez - -	„	„	—
40. Sherzang Sherdal - -	„	Indian	—
41. John Ali - -	„	„	—
42. Jacob Ali - -	„	„	—
43. Jimmy Fraser - -	„	„	—
44. Joseph Abraham - -	„	„	—

The s.s. "Trevessa" left Liverpool for Sidney, Cape Breton, Canada, on her last ill-fated voyage on the morning of the 2nd of January, 1923, a dull wintry day with a gale blowing from S.W. The pilot and compass adjuster were discharged at Point Lynas, and we then proceeded on our voyage. Although in ballast the ship was in fine trim for any kind of weather, the weight on board being 1680 tons water ballast and about 2000 tons of bunker coal.

Bad weather was encountered from the start, and though we made of this a following wind and shaped a course to pass north of Ireland and so out into the Atlantic, before we were clear of the land we were meeting the Atlantic rollers and strong N.W. wind; nevertheless, we made fine progress. This was the commencement of what proved to be a hard struggle across the North Atlantic. The weather steadily got worse and worse, until a few days after we left Liverpool we passed right through a hurricane which was then travelling across the North Atlantic, encountering fierce winds and high seas as we approached the

middle of the storm, in the centre high seas tumbling dangerously on all sides with no wind, and overhead a small circular patch of blue sky, and we then passed out on the other side into a shrieking blizzard. The ship could not keep on her course and fell away a couple of points, but she plodded steadily on until a couple of hours later, when we had cleared the worst of the storm and she was able to carry on on her proper course. After this experience we thought we were in a position to judge the true worth of the vessel we were in, and the ship behaved magnificently throughout, and we were all very proud of her.

Even after we were clear of the hurricane the weather continued bad, and we arrived at Sidney, Cape Breton, on the 15th of January, having made a fair passage considering all things.

There the weather was very severe, the approaches and the harbour were frozen over, and before we could anchor in the harbour fires had to be lit under the hawse pipes to thaw the ice in order to release the anchors. The day after our arrival we started loading our cargo for New Zealand and Australia, but we had to leave before completing the amount of cargo to be taken at this port, as the wind had changed and there was a probability of the heavier ice being blown out from the Gulf of St. Lawrence and blocking the harbour. We proceeded to Louisberg, N.S., and continued loading the Sidney cargo, which had been transported thither by rail.

From Louisberg we proceeded to St. Johns, New Brunswick. On this passage we had a strong beam wind off shore which raised a short sea, and the spray flying over the ship

To face p. 6.



FIRST OFFICER JAMES C. STEWART SMITH

froze as it fell to such an extent that the weight of the ice on the weather side listed the ship two degrees, while at the entrance to the Bay of Fundy we encountered a blinding snowstorm which delayed our arrival for some hours. A quantity of cargo was taken on board at St. Johns, and then we went on to New York to complete the outward cargo. The cold all round the coast was very severe, and we were not sorry that our stay there was a short one.

On leaving New York we proceeded via the Panama Canal to Auckland, New Zealand. The change of climate as we ran south from New York was very quick, and was a great relief after the bitterly cold weather we had been experiencing. On the second day out we commenced to thaw and to shed some of our thicker garments, and three or four days later it was so warm that we were in white suits and glad to keep under the awnings in the tropical heat. The fine weather continued after we had passed through the canal, and we made a splendid passage to Auckland. The cargo we had brought was to be discharged at five ports in New Zealand and two in Australia.

The time passed on the New Zealand coast and in New Zealand ports was a very pleasant one. After leaving Auckland, we visited Wellington, Lyttleton, Timaru and Dunedin, spending Easter at Timaru. From Dunedin we went across to Melbourne, Australia, and later, while on passage from Melbourne to Sydney, our final port of discharge, we picked up the S.O.S. sent out from the s.s. "Iron Prince," which had run ashore in a fog. I answered the call and proceeded to her assistance, arriving on the spot a few hours later. I spoke to her and she informed me

that she did not require my help as a coasting steamer had already taken off part of her crew and was bringing further assistance to arrive later that afternoon. From Sydney we proceeded to Newcastle, N.S.W., and after bunkering continued the voyage to Port Pirie to load the homeward cargo.

II

AT PORT PIRIE AND FREMANTLE

ON Sunday, the 29th of April, we arrived in ballast at Port Pirie at the head of Spencer's Gulf in South Australia, to take on board a cargo of zinc concentrates, and began loading two or three days after our arrival. These concentrates are the product of the Broken Hill mines, where various kinds of ore are extracted, and, as will be seen later, various kinds were shipped on the "Trevessa."

When shipped, the concentrates are a very heavy dust of the consistency of half-set cement, more solid than mud but not as solid as fully set cement, and usually have five to ten per cent. water in them, the moisture being sufficient to keep the mass semi-solid ; it hangs together like flour, and a crust often forms over it which has to be broken before a shovel can be used.

Water does not percolate through the concentrates, though if any entered a hold in which they were loaded it might penetrate as much as a foot beneath the surface of the heap. According to competent authorities, the concentrates do not have any effect on the plates of a ship, and water washing about would not affect them or cause them to shift in a seaway. The space they occupy is from

16½ to 20½ cubic feet per ton in a loose condition, less when tightly packed in a confined space.

The concentrates loaded in the "Trevessa" were the property of the British Metal Corporation, to whom they had been sold by the Board of Trade, and were shipped by authority of the Corporation, the ship being chartered by the Zinc Producers Association of Melbourne.

The cargo was stowed in four holds. In Nos. 1 and 4 lower holds were 1473 tons 14 cwts. 3 qrs. of de Bavay slime, in No. 2 lower and 'tween deck holds 2779 tons 11 cwts. 2 qrs. of Sulphide Corporation slime, in No. 3 lower and 'tween deck holds and No. 4 lower hold 2310 tons 11 cwts. 1 qr. Broken Hill proprietary slime. There was no material difference in the natures of the various slimes.

Like all cargoes taken in at Port Pirie, that of the "Trevessa" was loaded under the supervision of Captain Mars, Lloyds' Register surveyor there, though on this occasion he did not act in his official capacity. He is well known in the port for the care with which he supervises the work, and for his insistence on having his instructions properly carried out, and when the "Trevessa" left he certified that her cargo had been properly loaded and to his satisfaction.

Under Captain Mars' instructions the spaces between the limbers or floor boards of the holds were chinsed, so that the concentrates should not get through the boards into the bilges and thence into the pumps and choke them. Chinsing consists in filling the spaces between the boards with raw oakum or single rope yarn, as in caulking, only

the material is not hammered down or covered with pitch, as is done in the latter case.

Before the limbers were chinsed the bilges had been cleaned, and the roseboxes, which prevent rubbish from the bilges getting into the suction pipe of the pumps, had been attended to.

On to the floors thus chinsed the slime was loaded from stock on the wharf. It was loaded first into steel tubs, which were delivered up to the steamer's tackle, then hoisted in by the steamer's winches and derricks and emptied into the holds, first of all in a heap, and them trimmed out to the skin of the ship and the bulkheads in the form of a flat cone, with a safe angle of rest.

Many thousands of tons of concentrates have been shipped from Port Pirie in hundreds of vessels during recent years, and all have been loaded in the manner adopted for the "Trevessa." In only one other instance has trouble been known to have arisen, and that was with the "Port Auckland," which met with very heavy weather on her homeward voyage at the same time as the "Trevessa" and buckled, and had to put back for repairs.

The question of loading is a technical one, but is important to this narrative, for the cause of the loss of the "Trevessa" was the entry of water into No. 1 hold, and owing to the nature of the cargo and the method of stowing it, the water could not reach the bilges and tanks, and therefore could not be removed by the pumps.

Before we started loading, the ship was surveyed by Captain Mars, when it was found that a couple of rivets in No. 1 hold were "weeping." These were repaired under

his instructions, and no other signs of damage were found.

The summer draught of the "Trevessa" was 25 feet 1 inch, and the mean draught at the Federal Wharf, where she lay, was 24 feet 6 inches, and as she lay alongside the wharf she took the mud for from four to six hours each day, by the time she was three parts loaded.

When I arrived at Port Pirie, one steamer was there taking the ground while loading, and it wasn't long before I found that this was customary at all the berths in the port. I talked the matter over with other shipmasters, and I also went into it with regard to my own ship with the harbour-master, the agents and pilots, and was reassured by them all on the point.

Calculations were made as to the amount of cargo to be loaded at the wharf, and what would have to be taken from lighters. The calculations for loading are based on the tides—whether rising or falling. If we had been a few days later, on the Spring tides, we should probably have loaded all the cargo at the wharf. As it was, the latter part of the cargo, amounting to 380 tons, was taken on board from lighters while the ship lay in the roadstead in deeper water. We lay alongside the wharf from 29th April until 12th May, and finished loading from lighters at midnight on the 14th May.

I may state here that when the "Trevessa" was nearly at her loaded draught she would submerge one inch for every 41 tons loaded. It will be seen that to load the quantity given above (380 tons) on the draught of 24 feet 6 inches, would have put the vessel to a draught of 25 feet 3 inches.



CAPTAIN AND MRS. FOSTER AND FIRST OFFICER SMITH AFTER BEING RECEIVED BY THE KING.

As against this, we had 50 tons of fresh water in the engine room tank, which was kept there for the purpose of refilling the boilers before sailing, the balance to be pumped out; and further, there were about 15 to 20 tons of rubbish on the deck which had got to be thrown overboard, while one inch had to be allowed on the draught for inland navigation, giving the vessel a draught of 25 feet 1 inch sea-going trim.

We left Port Pirie for Antwerp, via Fremantle and Durban, on May 15, 1923. Bad weather was encountered from the start, the sea was heavy and the wind force 5 to 7 Beaufort scale; but no one on board anticipated for a moment, from the way the ship behaved, the fate which was in store for her.

During the course of the Inquiry into the loss of the ship it transpired that some of the men when talking among themselves had expressed the opinion that they would never reach home. The reasons they gave for these doubts were ample proof that superstition is not altogether dead in the Mercantile Marine. In the first instance there was a great deal of talk about a black cat, which we had adopted in Port Pirie, deserting the ship before we sailed. Previous to that, another cat had decided that he had gone far enough and had left us at Timaru, New Zealand. Further misgivings were aroused when I disposed of two kittens from a batch of six black ones. This last incident was not easily forgotten, although I explained to a few of the most superstitious of the men that the two kittens were not quite black, as they each had a white bit on the chest! Later still, between Port Pirie and Fremantle, a fine tabby cat died before giving birth to her kittens. This particular

cat was the sailors' pet, and they were all directly interested in her, so felt her loss all the more. It appears that they had even been betting among themselves as to the number of kittens she would have. From these incidents they deduced they were going to have bad weather and that they were going to be unlucky. The pessimistic view that they were not going to reach home, which was really no more than talk among themselves, was only due to the fact that their superstitious fear had been aroused; because as far as the vessel was concerned they were all of the opinion that she was as good as any they had ever been in, and on the voyage out she had given us all a practical demonstration of her fine qualities as a sea boat.

We arrived at Fremantle on the 24th of May, and the same day loaded three to four hundred tons of bunkers from coal hulks while we lay at a buoy. All preparations were made to sail that same night, but before we commenced to let go the moorings a thick fog rolled in; so after waiting some time and the fog showing no signs of clearing, I cancelled the sailing and decided to leave the port at daylight next morning. In the early morning the fog cleared, and we sailed about 6 a.m. on the 25th of May.

III

THE HOMEWARD VOYAGE

ON leaving Fremantle the weather was fine, and in the hope that these conditions would continue, I shaped a course about W. by N. true, intending to continue on this course until we reached a latitude north of the prevailing wind, provided we did not meet the westerly winds in too great force, as in finer weather we could proceed at a good speed and make a better passage. On the first day, however, the wind commenced to freshen, and gradually increased to gale force, and I decided to shape a course more to the northward so as to get into the fine weather latitude sooner. The wind at this time was approximately west, so that the change of course brought wind and sea more on the side of the vessel and we were able to make rather better speed.

From the time of leaving Fremantle on the morning of the 25th May to noon of the 26th May we had only covered about 170 miles, which was very poor progress. At noon on the 26th May I shaped a course about N.W. by N. true, and on the following day we had covered about 180 miles and were in latitude approximately 28.50 S. The wind by this time had eased considerably, and was just

blowing a fresh westerly wind, so I decided to shape my course again more to the westward and make my passage across to Durban. There was a much bigger sea running than one would have expected from a wind of the force that was then blowing, but this sea would be due to worse weather further to the southward.

Up to this point the voyage had been far from pleasant, but, proceeding on a westerly course, we made fairly good progress for a few days. The average wind force was about 5 to 6 Beaufort scale, but it was by no means steady either in force or direction, and there were frequent strong squalls. The general direction of the wind was between W.S.W. and S.W., that is to say, about two to four points off the port bow. During the whole time there was a pretty big sea running, and the after well-deck in particular, with its open rails, was always more or less under water. The ship was making by no means unusually bad weather of it, and we were all quite satisfied with the way she was behaving, and hoping that each day would bring a change for the better.

On Friday, the 1st June, the wind and sea were a bit more vicious, and gradually increased in the course of the next day. The ship was behaving splendidly, and except for the extra discomfort due to the heavy weather, there was nothing much for us to worry about. On the afternoon of the 2nd I eased the engines a few revolutions so that the ship would take the seas more easily and thus lessen the possibility of any damage being done. During the night the wind shifted more to the southward and increased, and although there was a high sea running we

To face p. 16.



OFFICERS OF S.S. "TREVESSA"



ENGINEER OFFICERS OF S.S. "TREVESSA"

did not ship any dangerous seas, nor was any damage done until about 10 o'clock on Sunday morning.

The first accident of the homeward passage occurred at 10 a.m. on June 3rd, but this did not in any way tend to weaken the ship. A huge sea crashed aboard amidships on the port side, tearing the two port lifeboats adrift from their lashings, smashing the chocks away, breaking ring bolts out of the boat deck, and throwing the lifeboats inboard against the rails and breaking in the door of the chief engineer's cabin. On this happening, I immediately brought the ship head to sea and eased the speed while the boats were being secured, the boats themselves appearing not to have suffered much damage. The weather then was very bad, blowing a S.S.W. gale, and I decided to heave to.

At 10.30 p.m. that night the sea was still as high as ever, but seemed to be less vicious and not breaking so much. I was talking to Mr. Smith, the first officer, and he remarked that he thought the ship was going a bit easier, and we both were of the opinion that before morning we should be able to proceed again on our course. The weather was described by one of the men at the Board of Trade Inquiry as follows: "There was that much water on the deck that you did not want to go aft to see the log even; you might get washed over. You had to watch your chance and run for it. The water was up to your knees, sometimes over your head. You had to run through it with a guy to the ventilator. I was washed about. It was as much as you could do to look after yourself on deck."

It must be understood here that the log to be read was right aft on the poop, and in order to get there the man had to go along the after well-deck. This description by one of the crew did not apply only to the weather experienced on the night of the accident, for throughout the voyage a great deal more water was taken over the after-deck than any other part of the ship, owing to the fact that on each side were open rails instead of bulwark plates opposite the hatchways. The guy to the ventilator, to which he refers, was a lifeline stretched fore and aft along the deck from ladder to ladder, passing round the ventilator in the middle of the deck. Lifelines were stretched along both well-decks, and were always in place in bad weather.

At midnight on June 3rd, the position being Lat. 28.45 S., Long. 85.42 E., the vessel being hove to and labouring heavily, it was reported by Michael Scully, A.B., that the ship was making water forward, that he, as well as the other men in the forecastle, could hear water swishing about in the hold under their feet. I immediately ordered the second officer, Mr. R. H. Hall, to go forward and get the carpenter to sound the forepeak and forward tanks, while I personally informed the chief engineer, Mr. N. V. Robson, of what had been reported, and ordered the pumps to be tried in succession on the forepeak and forward tanks and bilges, to see if any water could be found. At this time the sounding of the tanks and bilges could be taken without difficulty, and from the bridge it was not apparent that there was anything at all wrong with the vessel; she appeared to be riding the seas easily and was freeing herself of water without any difficulty, but when I went forward I

found she was not lifting as she should ; she was heavy. The tanks were reported dry. The order to put the pumps on reached the engine room at about 12.20 in the morning, and they were kept on till the engine room was abandoned, between 2.0 and 2.15 a.m. No water was got until a few minutes before the abandonment of the ship, and then it was from the forepeak tank.

I went forward with the chief engineer, and by placing our ears on the deck in the donkeymen's room and firemen's forecastle, which were on the port side, could hear water in No. 1 hold. The sound of the swishing of the water heard by the men was not at first apparent to us above the noises of the storm, and it was only after lying with our ears on the deck that we were able to detect the difference. We then went across to the starboard side, as there was an entrance to the forepeak on that side through the sailors' forecastle. There was no sign of any leak in the forepeak. I then ordered the boatswain and sailors to clear the gear away from the forepeak tank door, and had it taken off, while the engineers got tools to cut away rivets in the collision bulkhead to allow water to get into the forepeak tank, so that the pumps could get to work. I also ordered the carpenter to take the hatch off No. 1 hold, so that we might ascertain the extent of the damage. After seeing the other work started, I followed the carpenter on deck, when I discovered that the fore-deck was by then continually under water. The ship had apparently settled very much by the head, and heavy seas were breaking right over the hatches, making it impossible to open the holds to investigate the damage. When I went forward first I examined

the hatch coverings and ventilators to see whether there was any defect in them which would let water get into the hold from the deck, but everything was quite sound and the tarpaulins on the hatches were all in place and undamaged.

After I had returned on deck, Chief Engineer Robson and the second engineer, D. J. Mordecai, went down into the forepeak tank and began cutting off the heads of rivets. The chief engineer was standing on the grating about five feet above the floor of the tank. He cut off one rivet head, missed two and then cut off another. The rivets were not punched out as he went along because water was pouring through all the time, and Mr. Robson thought that if he cut off the heads of the rivets they could all be punched out afterwards. Then he looked up and saw above him that what he considered the strongest part of the bulkhead was just beginning to bulge. This bulge was about the size of a dinner plate, there was a crack in the bulkhead about six inches long, and the water was squirting right across the tank, so he sent away the second engineer and then left himself. The time was about 12.45 a.m. and the water must have been up to the top of No. 1 hold.

I had given orders to the second officer, who was on the bridge, to turn the ship round so as to run before the wind and sea, and while this was in course of being done, I returned to the bridge and completed the manoeuvre. The ship was turned in order to make her ride more easily in the seas, and thus ease the pressure on the bulkheads.

The engines had been running at rather less than half-speed, from 4 to 5 knots, owing to the heavy weather. The speed was increased slightly when turning, and the

engines were stopped just before 2.15 a.m. The disappearance of the water from the boiler water gauges, at about 12.30, indicated that the ship was down by the head, and a serious difference in the level of the oil bath was apparent at about 12.45 a.m. Steam was blown off when the engine room was abandoned, but all the auxiliary engines were left running.

The approximate distance covered by the ship from Fremantle till the time she foundered was 1640 miles, which gives an average speed of less than 7 knots.

IV

THE ABANDONMENT OF THE SHIP

JUNE 4.

No. 1 BOAT. CAPTAIN FOSTER.

1 a.m.—I ordered all hands to the boats and wireless operator to send “S.O.S.” giving our position and that we were abandoning the ship. All the crew were got away in the two starboard lifeboats, Nos. 1 and 3. The two port lifeboats had been damaged the day previous at 10.15 a.m. A huge sea had broken them away from gripes and flung them inboard against the rails.

2.15 a.m.—Abandoned ship; foredeck awash level with top of bulwark rail and settling fast by the head.

2.45 a.m.—Ship foundered. Boats standing by; and that was the last seen of her, standing almost on end. The lights were all burning, as dynamo had been left running. Before leaving I had stopped, gone astern, taken all way off the ship and again stopped.

Perfect discipline, and all hands calm and carrying out orders promptly. Stewards passing in provisions, biscuits and milk, and rest of crew swinging out boats. Lifebelts had been issued to all hands. "S.O.S." answered by s.s. "Runic" and two steamers, names unknown. These sent "O.K." We were unable to wait a reply as to whether they were coming to our assistance or as to how far they were from us. We lay to at our sea anchor all day and no vessel appeared.

3 p.m.—I had the two water-breakers and the tins (five) of biscuits and one case of milk brought aft, and hardened up the screw top of the biscuit tanks, which were nearly full. The biscuit tank and the cases of milk by the mast could not be broken into without noise. I was taking every precaution and preparing for a long voyage.

4 p.m.—Issued a small ration of biscuits—one biscuit per man.

5 p.m.—Set sail.

6 p.m.—Step of mast carried away, and No. 3 boat took us in tow.

10 p.m.—The tow-line carried away, and we decided to lay to for the night. The weather being so bad, it was dangerous for the boats to get close to each other. In the meantime we were repairing the step of the mast and making the mast secure. Wedged it on either

side with a case of milk, lashed it securely fore and aft and to the thwarts.

No. 3 BOAT. FIRST OFFICER SMITH.

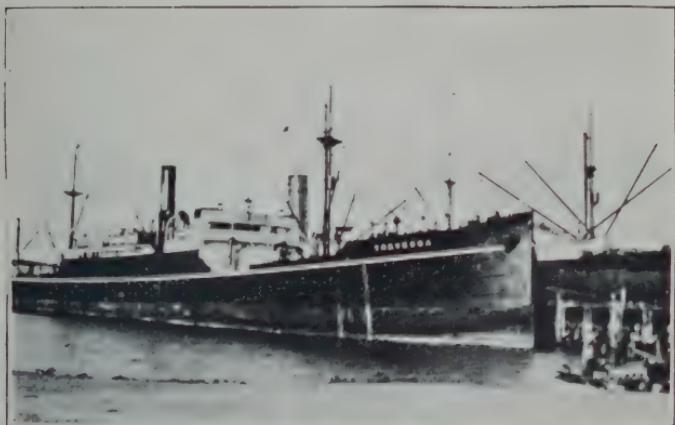
2.30 a.m.—Cleared ship, complete order and no panic, heavy sea. Hauled off and lay to close to captain's boat. About 3 p.m. ship seen to disappear. Sea anchor carried away, used oars.

No observations to-day. Lying to, as per captain's orders. Examined stores, 2 c/s milk, 2 breakers fresh water, not quite full, 1 tank biscuit, 3 spare tins additional.

Conditions uncomfortable, shared some clothing with others, most of crew very badly clothed. Towed captain's boat till line parted, then lay to till daylight.

By 1 a.m. I could see there was no hope of saving the vessel, and ordered all hands to be called, sent the chief officer to swing the boats out and the catering department to provision them, instructing Chief Steward R. H. James to get as much condensed milk and biscuits as possible into them. From previous experience during the war I had found that the milk was the best food under such circumstances. On various occasions I had discussed the provisioning of lifeboats with the steward, though I had not in any way anticipated having to put theories into practice, and I had explained to him carefully the nature of the provisions I would put in the lifeboats if it was my bad luck to have to use them again. He had sailed with me

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S.S. "TREVESSA" AT TIMARU, N.Z.



S.S. "TREVESSA'S" FOOTBALL TEAM

since August 1918, and at that time, while the war was still on, the boats were always swung out and ready for immediate use. What I had told him then, when there was danger of the ship being sunk at any minute, about the provisioning of and the conditions in an open lifeboat had made a deep impression on him, so that when he got the order to provision the boats on this occasion he knew exactly the lines to work on, and I told him again not to waste any time in getting tinned meats. The only stores actually in the lifeboats at the time were the usual stores always kept in them, *i.e.* biscuits and water.

The stewards had the greatest difficulty in carrying out their orders, and there was great danger in the work they had to do to get the further provisions for the boats. The storeroom was situated right aft, and the entrance to it was through a companionway from the poop deck to the main deck, then down a perpendicular ladder at the after end of the storeroom to the next deck. The boxes and cases had to be hauled up from the storeroom and carried along the after well-deck, where heavy seas were constantly breaking over. A graphic description of the difficulties and dangers of getting along this deck in bad weather has been given in a previous chapter by one of the crew when describing his struggle, with the aid of a lifeline, to get along to read the log, and it is easy to understand how much more difficult it must have been for the stewards who were carrying heavy cases.

When the quantity of provisions that we had with us when we finally left had been brought up, the chief steward reported to me what he had got, and asked whether there

was plenty of time to get other stores. I could see that there would be no time to get further stores, as they were already having the greatest difficulty in getting in and out of the storeroom because of the angle at which the ship was lying, the fore end of the ship by this time being almost completely submerged ; so I ordered him to divide the stores he had brought along—6 cases of milk and 12 tins of biscuits—equally between the two boats. This was done, and the cartons of cigarettes and tobacco, which were stored amidships, were then passed out and, as in the case of the other stores, divided equally between the two boats.

During the war, when I was serving as first officer, I was torpedoed twice within sixteen hours, in two different ships, and spent nine and a half days in the boats. We were torpedoed about 320 miles W.S.W. of the Scilly Isles, and we landed on the north coast of Spain. The experience thus gained stood me in good stead on this occasion, and I decided to do much the same things as were done then, as I had got an idea of the amount of food and water to give each man to keep him alive, and of the danger of drinking sea water. It was on that occasion also that I learnt of the various devices for keeping down thirst, such as drawing sea-water into the nostrils and blowing it out again, and keeping the face and head wet, etc. That experience, though shorter, was more bitter than that in the "Trevessa's" boats. Twelve of the boat's crew of thirty-one died from cold and exposure, and of those who survived most were suffering severely from frostbite, and a good many lost toes from this cause.

The ship was now settling fast by the head, but on an even keel, the collision bulkheads had started to give way, and the water was rushing from the fore-deck through the forecastles into the forepeak and the forepeak tank. Before the whole of the crew had left the forecastle, it was all aswamp. The water had broken the doors in, half the door was knocked off, and the benches had been broken. All hands were by then engaged in preparing to abandon ship. Meanwhile, Mr. D. Lamont, wireless operator, had been ordered to send out the S.O.S., giving our position, Lat. 28.45 S., Long. 85.42 E., and stating that we were abandoning ship.

The behaviour of all was wonderful, and it is a privilege such as is accorded to few to see what men can do in cold blood to combat a situation with all the odds against them. At the beginning, of course, it was not realised that things were really serious. Though all the men were awake and the watches had just been relieved, while the others had been disturbed by the unusual amount of talking in the forecastles when I went along to investigate, they just looked on and were mildly interested in the proceedings. While I was in the fireman's forecastle, the first one visited, some water splashed over the door-step into the forecastle, and a couple of the men were none too pleased at the bit of extra work entailed in baling this out with tins and buckets. I found them taking things just as quietly in the sailors' forecastle when I went across to go down the forepeak, and when the orders were given for clearing the gear away from the tank door, so that this could be taken off, they started in with a will.

When I got on deck again from the forepeak, I found the carpenter, with the men who had gone with him to take off the hatch of No. 1 hold, holding on for their lives with the seas continually breaking over, and I could see at once that we could not save the ship, and it was then that I gave orders for all hands to clear away the boats. They all had to struggle along through the water on the fore-deck, clinging to the lifeline as they went, and they set about getting the boats out in a proper workmanlike manner and with no undue fuss.

Two of the lifeboats were quite sufficient for the whole ship's company. The starboard lifeboats, Nos. 1 and 3, were used, for we feared that the port lifeboats, Nos. 2 and 4, although there was no serious damage apparent, might have been very badly strained when the sea crashed aboard and broke them away from their gripes the day before. Also, it would have taken longer to free the port lifeboats from the lashings which we had put on them. These lashings were right round the boats, round the stanchions underneath the boat deck and round the boat davits. The chocks of No. 2, the forward port boat, had been so badly smashed that we had been unable to put the boat back into its place, and she was lashed securely to the deck, lying on her side. In the case of No. 4, aft port boat, though the chocks were badly damaged she was re-placed in them, but required a lot of additional staying and wedging and extra lashings round her to keep her down. The bridge boats were not taken into consideration, as they were so much smaller than the others, and though of the same style and build, had a smaller percentage of buoyancy tanks along the sides ; but

it is probable that if either of the starboard lifeboats had been so damaged in launching as to be useless, we should have endeavoured to put the bridge boats in the water. Every boat was fully equipped and ready for use, so all we had to do was to take the boats which we considered were the best.

I had sent the third officer, Mr. A. Tippett, to assist the chief officer with the boats as soon as the second officer had started the manoeuvre of turning the ship round. When this manoeuvre had been completed, I assisted the second officer to pass out all the lifebelts and then left him in charge of the bridge while I measured the distances to the nearest land; when that had been done, I sent him back to take the chart and sextants to the boats and to assist in getting these away. Only a sailor can realise the difficulties to be overcome in swinging boats out under such circumstances, with a heavy sea running, the ship tumbling about, a gale blowing, and in the dark, with the constant danger that the boats would take charge, *i.e.* become unmanageable. Every man had to act quickly and use every ounce of his strength to hold the boats as the ship rolled. One mistake would cause the boat to be smashed.

As soon as the boats were ready the engines were stopped, then put astern to take all the way off the ship, and again stopped and rung off. The engineers had been told that when the engines had been rung off it would be a signal for them to come on deck. All this time J. M'Green, A.B., had been at the wheel, taking and answering the orders quite coolly till the final "Leave the helm amidships and take your place in the boat." The rudder by now was

not much use, as the stern was too high out of the water. The ship would not steer to make a leeside for the boats, and the propeller had no grip to help the ship to turn.

The crew right through were magnificent. The boats were dropped successfully into the water with the few in them who had been ordered in to unhook and fend them off the ship's side, the others waiting for the order for them to enter. When this was given they took their places in the boats, either by jumping into them when they were almost level with the rail on top of a sea, or by sliding down manropes which had been rigged on the ship's side, and letting go as the boats rose towards them. The boats were kept alongside while I collected a few of the ship's papers, all the men's discharge books, and a few things which afterwards proved most valuable, as will be seen later in the account of the expedition in the boats—for instance, clothes and a leather suitcase. About half an hour elapsed from the time the boats were ordered out until they were swung over.

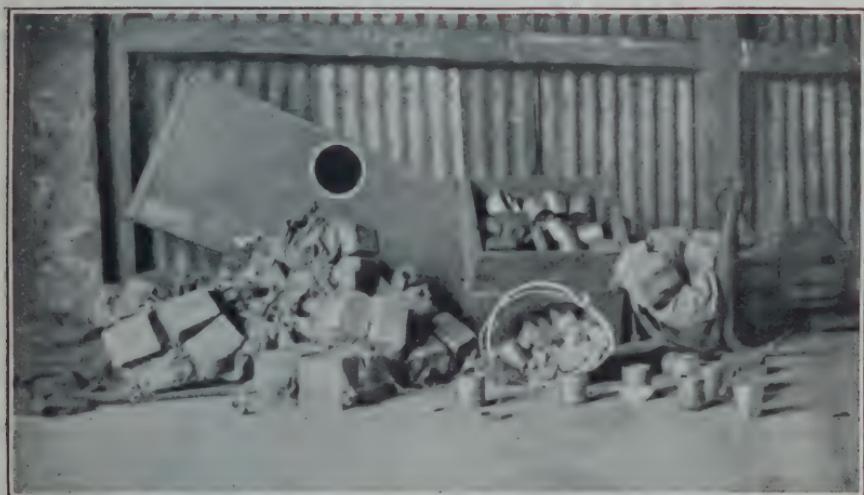
When the boats were being launched, one of the firemen, Joseph Abraham, fell into the water between the boat and the ship's side, but was got safely into the chief officer's boat. The seas were very high—we estimated them to be from 20 to 30 feet—and the force of the wind was 7 to 9 Beaufort scale, which means 40 to 50 miles per hour.

Lifebelts had been issued to all hands, but some did not put them on, so as not to be hampered in the heavy work of swinging out the boats. Before the Board of Trade Inquiry, M. Scully, A.B., summed up his reason for not wearing a lifebelt very clearly:—"When I went into that

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THE CAT WHICH WOULD NOT BE SAVED



STORES AND LIFEBELTS FROM NO. 1 BOAT

lifeboat I did not want no life jacket. I wanted to be loose and help to assist all I could. You want to be active when you have to get boats out, you do not want life jackets. If I were to get into the water I would go without a belt, because it would be no use to me. Who is to pick you up? What is the good of going down with a lifebelt round your neck? It is nonsense. . . . If the boat would not save me, the ruddy lifebelt would not save me"—an opinion which is shared by many of the older A.B.'s.

During the voyage in the boats the lifebelts were used for the men to lie on to keep them out of the water, which was over the bottom boards, and as platforms to keep the tins of biscuits out of the water. Some were still with us when we reached Rodriguez, but in a rather worn and rotten condition as the result of their use in the boats.

A black cat and four black kittens were also placed in No. 1 boat, but while this was being lowered the cat jumped back aboard, and without the mother it was impossible to keep the others.

The ship was on an even keel, but so much down by the head when the boats were got away that the forepart of the ship was submerged level with the top of the bulwark rail, and my boat, No. 1, was in some danger of being washed on to the foredeck.

We succeeded in getting the boats into the water and all hands away from the ship; there now remained the equally hazardous operation of getting the boats clear of the ship's side with the way all taken off the ship, but this was managed successfully. The only accident which occurred was when No. 1 lifeboat was leaving. An oar,

which was being used in fending the boat off from the ship's side, broke, and the boat struck the ship's side violently and cracked one plank below the water-line on the port side. This broken oar, along with other floating wreckage, and an upturned boat, was seen by the s.s. "Trevean," which was the first of the steamers coming to our assistance to arrive on the scene of the accident.

The boats kept near the ship, about a quarter of a mile away and rather ahead of her, for as long as she remained afloat, drifting with one oar out to steer with, and occasionally using other oars to keep their heads to the sea ; we could see the ship's masthead lights and her navigation lights lower down, and could watch the position of the masthead lights altering, until she sank about half-an-hour after we had left her. While the lights of the ship were still in sight I do not think any of us fully realised the seriousness of the situation. As she disappeared there was a murmur all round, "She's gone," and the same remark was shouted from one boat to the other. For a while it produced rather a depressing effect on everyone, which no doubt would have been more intense if the time had not been fully occupied in handling the boats and keeping them head to sea, for though our sea anchors were over, we were also obliged to use oars to keep the boat's head up to meet the seas end-on. Most of the men dispensed with their lifebelts within an hour or so of leaving the "Trevessa," and the rest of them soon after daylight in the morning. The latter were mostly firemen who had not been called upon to do much during these first few hours.

In the after end of the boat were the officers, engineers

and chief steward. Between them and the next thwart was a space left vacant for baling purposes. In the centre were all the coloured men (firemen), and forward and round the mast the carpenter and sailors, these being in the best position to look after the gear and to give assistance with the sail and in handling the boat.

At daylight we closed with the other boat and discussed the position, and I gave my decision to remain there as we were, drifting to our sea anchors, for the rest of the day. Most of us were thoroughly soaked through before getting away from the "Trevessa," and we spent the first day overhauling our gear, talking over the recent events and discussing our chances of being rescued by one of the vessels which had picked up our S.O.S. I questioned Mr. Lamont, wireless operator, as to the vessels he had been in touch with for the few days previous to the foundering, with the idea of finding out if any of them were approaching our position, and ascertaining approximately the distance they might be from us. From what he told me I gathered that they were all a long way off. To add to this, the boats were fast drifting away from the scene of the accident, so that the probability of our being picked up soon was not great.

The water breakers and the tins of biscuits and one case of milk were brought aft so as to be under my personal observation. One biscuit tank was already aft secured under the third thwart, with the screw cap facing aft into the space which was kept free for baling, so that there was no difficulty in keeping our eye on it, but there was no room in the after end of the boat for the other biscuit tank, and it was therefore left under the second thwart, and two

cases of milk were left forward wedging up each side of the mast. In the Log entry under June 4, 3 p.m., I mention that the screw cap of the biscuit tank left forward had been hardened up, and that this and the cases of milk could not be broken into without noise. If, as the men got hungry, temptation to help themselves had proved greater than they could withstand, they could not have opened the biscuit tank without hammering at the screw cap, nor could the milk cases have been opened without a lot of noise. If either had been attempted, it would have attracted our attention and we could have stopped them, but in fairness to the men I should say that no attempt of the sort was ever made.

We used the biscuits from the forward tank first and hardened up the tank cap each time. When the case of milk aft was finished we opened one of those by the mast, passing all the tins aft and leaving the case still in position wedging the mast, and the same thing was done when the third and last case was opened.

It was necessary for me to take full control of the situation from the start and maintain it throughout, and only once during the whole course of the trip did we hear a murmur. This was when T. Gomez growled at not having his ration of milk when I had decided that it was necessary to reduce the ration when the second case was finished. This was on the twentieth day, and he could not understand why the already short ration was reduced after such a length of time, when all the men were hoping that we were somewhere near land. He was afraid that we had lost our way and that it would only be by sheer luck that we should be picked

up. When he was assured that everything was all right, and that we were merely taking a precaution in case we missed the island in the dark, or were blown out of our course a bit and would therefore take a day or two longer in getting to Madagascar, he said nothing more, and we had no complaint from anyone else. Throughout the whole business the men were sensible of the fact that everything that was being done was what was believed to be the best to bring us all through.

Each and everyone was treated alike, and everyone could observe that when the rations were passed out no one was being favoured. The rations were passed out by Mr. Robson to the steward, and from the steward to each man individually. All the men could see that the distribution was fair, and they played up splendidly.

In spite of the discomfort, all hands were very cheerful and optimistic about being picked up, as everyone had been informed that the S.O.S. had been answered by various steamers, and all were hoping that before long the smoke of a rescuing vessel would be seen upon the horizon, so a sharp lookout was kept.

At 5 p.m., as nothing had appeared, and we had drifted a considerable distance north and east of the position where the ship sank, I decided that our chances of being picked up would be just as good if I were to sail the boats and make a course to the westward, which was the direction in which we wanted to go. Even as early as this I realised that we could not afford to lose any more time than necessary in making for some definite objective. It so happened that to begin with the fates were slightly against us, as soon

after hoisting the sail the step of the mast gave way, and this meant a loss of time while it was being repaired. While repairs were being carried out we tried towing, and threw a line to No. 3 boat, and they carried on with us in tow. As may be understood, under the circumstances of wind and sea at that time, this was a heavy strain to put on the two boats, and even if the tow line had not carried away, as it did, we should probably have had to abandon the attempt. Owing to the plank which was cracked in getting away from the "Trevessa," my boat was leaking badly, and though we were continually baling, the amount of water in her made her very heavy to tow and liable to strain. At first two buckets were used for baling, but after the cracked plank had been caulked, on the 6th, only one was in general use for that purpose, and a tin was used to bale the water into the bucket.

There were in my boat, No. 1, twenty in all. I had with me Chief Engineer Norman Ventress Robson, Third Officer Arthur Tippett, Third Engineer Thomas Knox Fair, Wireless Operator Donald Lamont, Chief Steward Robert Henry James, Apprentice Ralph William Flynn, Messroom Steward Kenneth M'Kenzie, Carpenter Edward M'Parlin, Able Seamen Michael Scully, James M'Green, Gorden Lister, and Richard Jones, Firemen Tom Patchoo, Mount Lee, John Lopez, Thomas Gomez, Mussim Nagi, Ali Nagi, Jacob Ali. The nationalities of the Europeans were as follows: six Englishmen, two Scotsmen, three Irishmen, two Welshmen. The coloured men were:—two Burmese, two Arabs, two Portuguese West Africans, and one Indian.

In the chief officer's boat, No. 3, there were twenty-four in all, namely :—Chief Officer J. C. Stewart Smith, Second Officer Richard H. Hall, Second Engineer David John Mordecai, Fourth Engineer James B. Edwards, Apprentices Douglas J. Bell, E. W. T. Goddard, Charles Seaborn and Henry E. Sparkes, Assistant Steward William Sturt, Ship's Cook William Allchin, Assistant Cook William Barton, Boatswain Albert Sumner, Able Seamen Thomas M'Gee, Philip Burke, A. G. Wolley, Donkeymen R. Wilson and Joe Baptiste, Greaser George Stainton, and Firemen C. Bainbridge, Karl Brink, Sherzang Sherdal, Joseph Abraham, Jimmy Fraser and John Ali. The nationalities of the Europeans in this boat was as follows :—thirteen Englishmen, two Scotsmen, two Irishmen, one Welshman and one Swede. The coloured men were :—one Afghan and four Indians.

V

THE BOATS AND THEIR EQUIPMENT

ON the first day in the boats, though no note is made of it in the Log, I had roughly calculated the quantity of the provisions which we had with us in the boat, and I estimated, although we were all then very hopeful of being picked up soon, that if we did have to carry on it would take us about twenty days to reach land. I realised from the start that shortage of water was going to test our endurance to the utmost, and as will be seen from entries in the Log I wrote, it was not until the afternoon of the third day that I issued the first water ration. As will be seen also from the Log, the amount of food issued was just about enough to aggravate a healthy appetite, and as Michael Scully expressed it at the Board of Trade Inquiry, I made them live for the first twenty-four hours or so on their Sunday dinner. He was also kind enough to inform the court that that Sunday dinner was a good one.

The two boats in which we left the ship were two of what we term Class I. lifeboats, and I will here give a detailed description of the boats and their equipment. Both boats were clincher built of wood, and were for all practical purposes the same size, but the measurements



At Rodriguez, showing cut-away sternpost and spliced halyards



At Mauritius

NO. 1. THE CAPTAIN'S BOAT

given are the actual measurements of my boat. Length 26 ft., breadth 8 ft. 3 inches, depth 3 ft. 4 inches, and the draught, with the stores, equipment and crew aboard, would be about 2 feet.

The method adopted by the Board of Trade to determine what would be a safe carrying load for a boat of this class, is to multiply length by breadth by depth, and then multiply the result by .6 coefficient of fineness. This is then divided by 10. It will thus be seen that the safe working load for these boats was forty-four men. To put this number of men into the boat would mean that it would be very tightly packed, and that not an inch of space would be left in which to move. It would, of course, be practicable to put this number of people into a boat if it were necessary for rescue work or for covering very short distances, but it would have been utterly impossible for the expedition we had in front of us. As it was, we were all very much cramped. I do not suppose that it was for a moment anticipated that boats such as these would ever be called upon to undergo a test like the one we were compelled to put them to. The mere fact that they withstood the test in itself speaks for the wonderful capabilities of these boats. The manner in which they stood the battering was a wonder to us all.

Metal air-tight cases were fitted for the full length of each side of the boat and enclosed by a wooden casing, the top of this casing forming a side-bench along either side of the boat level with the thwarts, of which there were four. On the after edge of the foremost of these thwarts was a band for securing the mast, and immediately under it, secured to

the keelson, was the step into which the mast was fitted when in position.

In addition to the four upper thwarts there were lower thwarts placed midway between the upper ones and just above the bottom boards. These were loose, and rested in brackets secured to the casing round the buoyancy tanks. In the space in the boat which we kept for baling one of these lower thwarts was dispensed with, and this board with the other in the fore end of the boat helped to keep the men out of water. The most forward one of all was unshipped, as the forward end of the boat was always dry, and except when otherwise wanted, was used to help to keep the men out of the water in the middle of the boat. In the Log entry of June 10, it will be seen that the tack of the sail was made fast to the end of a stretcher out to windward, and it was this forward lower thwart that was used as stretcher, with its end against the forward lifting hook and lashed down there.

The length of the mast was about 17 ft., and it carried a yard of about 12 ft. 6 inches, to which the sail was lashed. It was a lug sail, and these boats carried only one each. I cannot give the exact measurement of this sail, but when made fast to the yard it would be about a foot short of the length of the yard, which I gave above as 12 ft. 6 inches. The foot of the sail would be about 14 to 15 ft., and the other measurements in proportion.

The sail of No. 1 boat was larger than that of No. 3 boat, being about two cloths wider.

This extra size, though an advantage in fine weather, was a source of trouble when the weather was bad, as the

area of the sail could not be sufficiently reduced by reefing. That is why I had to resort to the goose-winging described in the log, which did indeed reduce the area of the sail, but also caused it to bag so that sailing close to the wind was an impossibility. Also when, on June 26th, only a corner of the sail was used, by hoisting the clew, the folds of the reefed sail gave us a lot of trouble by flapping about.

The sail was an ordinary dipping lug with two sets of reef points. The tack was made fast right forward and set close down after the sail had been hoisted and made fast; the halyards were made fast to the weather side of the second thwart and acted as a stay. To start with, this was the only stay we had in use, and it is all that is required for ordinary purposes. The sheet was led right aft and made fast to a pin, of which there was one on each side, inside the gunwale within reach of the person steering, but these pins were small and it would have been hard work to hold the sheet unless a few turns were put round the pin or it were made fast. In either case the sheet would be liable to jamb, and it would be a slow job to let it go. To overcome this difficulty we passed the sheet round the pin, back over a rowlock about 4 ft. forward of it, then again round the pin, and the running part was usually held by whoever was at the tiller or by someone alongside of him. The halyards, too, were always ready to slip in the event of anything untoward happening. All the ordinary precautions taken in sailing a small boat were observed, but it was tedious work doing so day after day for so many days.

At the beginning the halyards were passed over a sheave which was fitted in the mast, but on the 6th of June, this

sheave carried away and we replaced it by a tail block that was in the boat. On the 21st June the sheave of the tail block carried away, and we had no other block or sheave to replace it. Something had to be done to effect a repair, and it was then that a leather suit case I had thrown into the boat proved very useful. First of all, with a penknife we cut away and rounded the edges of the sheave hole, then a couple of strips of leather from the suit case, wide enough to come up about an inch on each side of the sheave hole and soaked in oil, were passed through the hole, leaving a groove big enough for the halyards to run easily. Then the strips were pulled down tight, and were long enough to be secured by a good rope yarn lashing round them and the mast.

The stays and lashings and milk cases which were used to secure and stiffen the mast were all additional. When the step of the mast carried away on the first night we put a lashing round the bar of the lifting hook and round the foot of the mast which was aft side the first thwart, and this kept the mast firmly to the thwart. A forestay was improvised and set down to a ring in the eyes of the boat. This pulled against the lashing at the foot of the mast and helped to keep it stiff. The milk cases were wedged in on either side to prevent the mast slipping sideways, as, had it done so, it would have probably have caused serious damage to the bottom of the boat. Even with all these precautions we had to watch the lashings and cases very carefully, especially at night, when we had to punish the gear so much in manoeuvring in order to keep in close touch with the other boat. The lashings had to be constantly attended to and tightened up.

To face p. 42.



NO. 3 BOAT AT MAURITIUS



THE TWO BOATS AT MAURITIUS

On the 6th June, when we had to renew some of the gear, we added two backstays and set them down on each side of the framing, just inside the gunwale of the boat. The port one did not have as much clearance as the starboard one, and usually jambed before the required strain was on it, so after it was fast, we made a short end fast a few feet up and set it down to the end of the thwart. A fairly good idea of this can be obtained from the photograph of the boat taken at Rodriguez, but the mast was set up then by the fishermen for the photograph to be taken, and the port backstay is made fast in the bottom of the boat instead of to the framing. The splice in the halyards is plainly visible in the same photograph near the top of the mast. The starboard backstay and the two parts of the halyards lie along the mast, hitched on it a little above the thwart.

In the photograph taken at Mauritius showing the two boats together, the one on the right is First Officer Smith's boat, and is shown with the sail up, but the tack is made fast in the wrong place and should have been right forward. Natives had been sent to set up the gear and set the sails for the photograph ; the rig was a strange one to them, and in my boat they were unable to hoist the sail. A difference will be noted too in the tillers. That of First Officer Smith's boat is in the usual position, but mine is close down on to the gunwale. This was due to the top of the rudder breaking and the rudder having to be cut down to make a new top, and the top of the stern post being cut away to enable the tiller to be shipped. This repair is explained in the Log on June 26th. It may be noted that the lifeline

round my boat is intact, while it has been removed from First Officer Smith's boat. He had occasion to use the line for other purposes on the voyage whereas I came off better in this respect and still had it to fall back on in an emergency.

The equipment of the boats consisted of rudder and tiller, 8 ash oars 14 ft. long, and one steering oar 15 ft. long, with eight galvanised iron crutches or, as they are called in other parts of the book, rowlocks; one boat-hook; a sea anchor, which was a cone-shaped canvas bag, in the mouth of which there is a metal hoop about 2 ft. 6 inches in diameter, from which the bag tapers away to the base, which is open and about 6 inches in diameter. There were also two hatchets, two galvanised iron buckets and a baler, one lamp and a can of oil, one oil bag and another can of oil belonging to it, one spirit compass, the ropes necessary for the sea anchor and sail, one dozen self-igniting red lights in a watertight tin, and a box of matches also in a watertight tin.

The oil bag when in use is usually attached to the sea anchor so as to distribute oil on the water in bad weather to smooth the sea and prevent its breaking near the boat. On the only occasion on which I used oil I adopted another method, which is fully explained in its place (June 23rd). In this instance I used tins lashed to a rowlock on each quarter, from which the oil dripped and floated away astern. I adopted this method as the flow of oil from the oil bag is less easy to control. From previous experience I have known it to be necessary to haul in the bag frequently to make fresh punctures to release the oil. The material of



Photo by Campbell-Gray

NO. 1. THE CAPTAIN'S BOAT AT THE BRITISH EMPIRE EXHIBITION, WEMBLEY

which the bag is made swells in the water and becomes watertight, and the percolation from the opening in the stopper is not effectual.

The self-igniting red lights are distress signals, giving a brilliant red flare visible for several miles, and were for the purpose of attracting attention in the event of anything being sighted at night. One or two of these were used while the boats were in company to help us to get in touch again when we had managed to lose each other in the dark. A good many more were used during the passage when false alarms of a light were given. These lights always proved to be stars either rising or setting.

In addition, there were two galvanised biscuit tanks secured under the thwarts, and one water breaker to hold about twelve gallons in a cradle usually lashed to the bottom of the boat amidships.

With each water breaker a copper dipper is supplied, small enough to be lowered easily through the bung-hole. There is no particular regulation as to the size of this dipper, and we had three, two large ones and one small one, and the latter was the one that was used. This is a fairly complete list of the equipment required according to the Board of Trade regulations for these boats.

The stores always required to be in the boats (1 quart of water and 2 pounds of biscuits per man) were augmented before leaving by an additional water breaker, 5 tins of biscuits and 3 cases of condensed milk, containing about 130 tins in all, each boat being given the same quantity. In my boat one water breaker was two-thirds full and the

other half-full, giving us a total of about 14 gallons of water. Of this quantity we used about 8 gallons for the journey. The total amount of biscuits we had when we left the ship would be about 125 pounds. Of this quantity we lost between 40 to 50 lbs. on the way, owing to damage by sea water, and on arrival at Rodriguez we had about 30 lbs. left. Of the 130 tins of milk, we used 100 tins, having 30 left on arrival. In addition to this food, we had also 5000 Capstan Medium Navy Cut cigarettes, 10 lbs. of Capstan Medium tobacco, and three dozen boxes of safety matches. Of this quantity we had left on arrival 1000 cigarettes, 2 lbs. of tobacco and a few boxes of matches.

It will be seen from this that we had quite an appreciable quantity of provisions and stores left on our arrival at the island of Rodriguez, so that if it had happened that through passing it in the dark, or any other circumstances, we had missed the island, we still had a reasonable chance, if our strength held out, of effecting a landing on the much larger island of Madagascar.

The only instruments we had besides the compass were two sextants. One of these belonged to Gordon Lister, A.B., and the other was my own, but they were used by the third officer and myself, and were invaluable in determining our latitude each day. We also had with us the canvas boat cover, which proved very useful during the voyage.

VI

THE BOATS IN COMPANY

JUNE 5.

No. 1 BOAT. CAPTAIN FOSTER.

Daylight, 6 a.m.—I decided to make for Mauritius, taking advantage of the existing wind and westerly current, and intending to make S.E. trades. Owing to the fact that my boat had a much bigger sail, and although I had it reefed down, I was sailing much faster than the other. During the day I would carry on until well ahead, and then lay to for the other to come up. At night it was very difficult for the boats to keep company; No. 3 boat sailing on a course, while I manoeuvred to keep him in sight, at times circling him, luffing into the wind, etc.

8 a.m.—Issued ration of milk—one cigarette-tin lid per man—and one biscuit.

Noon—Lat. 28.38 S. Strong wind and rough sea. Carrying on as before, and during night manoeuvring to keep the other boat in sight, this being very difficult after the moon set.

No. 3 BOAT. FIRST OFFICER SMITH.

General conditions more favourable. Captain issued instructions to proceed to Mauritius.

Noon.—Lat. 28 deg. 38 min. S., approx. long. 85 deg. 40 min. E. Steering by position of sun.

Served ration water, one biscuit and spoonful of milk each person.

A good lookout was kept by night for lights, no one attempting to sleep during the first period in the boats. We took a good look round in the morning before hoisting sail, and during the rest of the day a sharp lookout was kept in the hope that one of the steamers which had answered our S.O.S. signals would be near, as very little headway had been made from the time of leaving the "Trevessa."

In order to keep the other boat in sight during the night, we had to keep close to it, and to do this we had to adopt various expedients, such as tacking across his stern, sailing close up astern of him and luffing into the wind to throw the wind out of the sail and dropping astern again. At other times we sailed past him and ahead, circling him, and at times we would drop the sea anchor over the side and use it as a drag. This last measure, however, we soon discontinued, as we realised that the sea anchor might be wanted in a greater emergency, if we had to ride out any severe weather, yet constant luffing or gibing the boat was punishing the gear too much. These facts all helped in making me decide, as I did later, that it would be better for the boats to separate.

When we abandoned the ship we were approximately 1600 miles from Fremantle, and 1728 miles from the Mauritius group of islands. There are not many spots in the world as far from land as that where the "Trevessa" was lost. Before leaving the ship I had roughly measured the distance to the different points, and I found we were then practically in mid-ocean, and this was a factor that helped considerably in solving the problem of where to steer for.

The reason for deciding to make for the Mauritius group was that it seemed to offer us the best conditions for getting to land, though it involved covering a greater distance than the alternative routes. The winds on the course chosen would be favourable, and there was the hope that at this time of the year we would carry the prevailing westerly winds, encountered in the high latitudes, across the usual calm belt which lies between them and the trade winds nearer the Equator. At this season, too, we should be more likely to encounter rainy weather, which would help to augment the supply of water, which was scanty for the long trip to be made, should we not be rescued by another vessel. Moreover, the temperature on the lowest latitude we should reach on this route would be a few degrees higher than the cool weather we were starting from, and therefore less trying than if we attempted to reach land by any other route.

The different routes that could be followed had to be thought out, and the one chosen that offered the best possibilities of a successful issue, taking into account weather conditions, provisions and water. To reach the

small islands to the southward (*e.g.* St. Paul's and Amsterdam), would have been impossible owing to the weather to be faced on the way, which would have been composed of westerly gales combined with bitter cold. And though there are provision depots on these islands, our chances of being taken off would have been small, as they are not in constant communication with the rest of the world as is the Mauritius group. They are uninhabited, and only occasionally visited by fishing schooners. Apart from this, it was very doubtful whether any of us would survive the cold long enough to enable us to reach these islands. Had we decided to go back over the course along which we had come, we should have had to steer for the north coast of Australia or the East Indian Islands, either of which courses would have meant sailing through tropical heat, and would have been an impossibility owing to the comparatively small supply of water we had with us.

On leaving the "Trevessa," no books or charts were placed in my boat. The second officer had taken them with him when I sent him from the bridge to help in getting the boats away, and they were put in No. 3 boat, in which he was. From the chart, the first and second officers were able to give me the exact positions, latitudes and longitudes of the islands in the Mauritius group, and we then found that Rodriguez was the nearest island in that group, and it was the one I decided to make for.

It would have been a great help, of course, if we had managed to save the chronometers, as we would then have been able to work out positions, and could have steered a direct course. This would have made a big difference in

the actual number of miles we would have to cover, and would also have helped in calculating our food rations. As it was, we were able to calculate the latitude, and as long as we arrived on the latitude of our destination before we had gone too far to the westward, all that remained for us to do was to try to steer our course true west and keep on this latitude until the island was reached.

A good many of the occupants of both boats were suffering from sea-sickness, but in spite of this, the chief topic of conversation was still the prospects of being picked up by another steamer, and there was no murmur or complaint when I told the crew that no water would be issued. They seemed to realise that we were in a tight corner, and that what was being done was for the best.

JUNE 6.

No. 1 BOAT. CAPTAIN FOSTER.

5 a.m.—Carried away step of mast and stopped to repair. Re-hoisting sail, carried away sheave in mast and also halyards. Lowered mast, replaced sheave by tail block at masthead and made necessary repairs.

6 a.m.—Set sail again, all repairs completed.

8 a.m.—Issued rations—one biscuit and one lid milk (two tins of condensed milk for 20 men).

Noon—Lat. 27.44 S., Long. approx. 84.39 E.

2 p.m.—Issued first ration of water—one-third of cigarette tin per man (half small dipper).

4 p.m.—Issued milk ration. Making course about W.N.W. true; steering by the sun—compass useless. During the afternoon carried away tiller-head. Repaired same by lashing a piece of wood on the side.

To-day I had the two axes, a meat chopper and large knife sent aft. I now had the water, provisions and weapons under personal observation. The reason I issued no water until to-day was that the men would not miss it so much while they were fresh and the weather was cool, and, unless picked up, we have a long passage before us.

6 p.m.—Steering about west true; wind shifting more to eastward. During the night wind shifting, making course a little south of west.

No. 3 BOAT. FIRST OFFICER SMITH.

Day begins with S.E. wind and fine generally. Crew all appear well and cheerful. Issued usual ration.

Noon—Lat. 27 deg. 44 min. S., Long. approx. 84 deg. 39 min. E. Course N.W. Distance 77 miles. Steering about W.N.W. Captain's boat went away to a position nearly out of sight and waited for us at

on over the stern. Hard work. We aren't so strong as we might be. Ober/ Eng. Mr. Wilson & some of us assisted by Mr. Fair 3rd Eng. we cut the top of the sternpost off level with the top of the gunwale & cut the sides of the stern down to make a new top. All finished & redder shipped again at 4:45 a.m. Running before it with a bit more sail up. The crew ready to man the head & the yard lashed across the gunwales. We sailed ahead of the Seal & going along fairly comfortably just shipped one drop and 2 others during the forenoon & the rest of that was saved in my a corner of the sail on starboard yard arm as she rolled down.

9 a.m. I sailed with the crew & ran on. we have all managed to dry off and a lot this morning here very thankfull for it too. Hope we'll manage to get dry today. The weather not settled yet though it looks better. A strong wind from the S. of E. & quickly but no rain followed over the boat.

noon Lat 19-35 S Steaming West running before wind & sea.
 2:45 p.m. Sighted Land. Carpenter fired to see it. All hands were excited & a different feeling appeared. Every body bucking to wind. Petrus right for it & should be handy their future clark. Don't expect to get ashore tonight as I don't know anything about the coast well enough or it at daylight in the morning unless very favourable like as it is tonight. There is a good moon that is great assistance. In this expedition I have had the very able support of a real old sailor Mr. Sculley. He is a real white man & you would go far to find a better sailor.

4 p.m. Freshening breeze, boat appears to be doing at least six knots. Day ends without change.

The fates certainly seemed against us, as on the third day repairs were again necessary to the mast, halyards and tillerhead, and caused loss of time. The steering also had to be done without the compass, as this was not working properly owing to the quick motion of the boat. This compass was a spirit compass and, as Michael Scully said at the Inquiry, everyone wished to drink the spirit, but I would not allow them to do so. Though even at this stage of the journey any liquid that was at all drinkable would have been eagerly seized on. In my opinion the spirit that was in the compass would have been more harmful than otherwise, and would have been more likely to create thirst than quench it. Unfortunately, my orders about this spirit were disregarded later on.

By this time all hands were feeling sore and stiff. It was impossible to get any exercise, or even indeed to sit still, owing to the jumpy motion of the boat. In spite of this, however, no complaint was heard, though on leaving the ship nearly all hands were wet through, and their clothes had been gradually drying on them. The cold, too, was felt bitterly during the night.

The crew were on watches the same as on board the "Trevessa," and were now divided into three watches, so that the minor duties could be apportioned to them regularly, *e.g.* baling the boat. The canvas boat cover which had been left in the boat was cut in two, and those not actually keeping

watch kept under cover of this canvas during the night, huddled close together for the sake of the warmth they could give each other. The canvas was not rigged up in any way like a tent, but was just stretched over the thwarts, and the men huddled down in the bottom of the boat underneath it, lying on the lifebelts.

On this day Mr. Robson and Mr. Fair, chief and second engineers, took adrift the casing round the air tanks over the cracked plank on the port side, removed the tanks, and caulked the crack with bits of rag and waste, reducing the leak considerably.

On this day, too, I took a small piece of wood and with a penknife started to cut out a small spoon, as I thought I could eat the ration of milk and biscuit better if I mixed the two. This spoon was not exactly a work of art, although Mr. Fair tried to improve it with his heavier pocket knife, but at the same time it answered its purpose. My method of procedure was as follows : I folded the biscuit into a piece of canvas and pounded it to a powder with a boat axe, then I mixed this powder with the milk in the hope that the mixture would prove a useful way of disposing of the dry biscuit. The experiment was not a great success ; the mess was too sticky, and did not form a very appetising meal, and I had great difficulty in swallowing it. With the small ration of water it was almost impossible to swallow the dry biscuit, and at this time there were few of the men who were eating any biscuits at all, contenting themselves with the milk and water

JUNE 7.

No. 1 BOAT. CAPTAIN FOSTER.

2.45 a.m.—Boats in company shifted tacks and steered about N.N.W. true, wind about N.N.E.

8 a.m.—Issued rations, milk and biscuit. Instructed men to lift sea water in handkerchiefs and draw water into nostrils and blow out again, and not to allow any to get back in the throat. Tried this with good results, also to strip to waist and swill with sea water. Rather cold; only a few tried.

Noon.—Lat. 27 deg. 11 min. S., Long. approx. 82 deg. 39 min. E. True course N. 73 deg. W., 111 miles. The longitude, course and distance worked by first and second officers (we have no books). Position very approximate.

2 p.m.—Issued water ration, same as before. Informed chief officer amount issued and times of rationing, and he agreed to do same. To start with I had two-thirds of a breaker and the other half-full. The chief officer had both breakers full, so with the four extra hands in his boat we were about even on stores and water. I had also put 5000 cigarettes and 10 lbs. of tobacco in each boat, and we had about 3 doz. boxes of matches each.

4 p.m.—Issued milk ration. Steering about N.W. true. Wind hauling to northward, and

as required we kept away until making about W.N.W. true. Sailing close-hauled. We wanted to make north and west and to get into S.E. trades. Wind and sea rising, prospects of a dirty night.

No. 3 BOAT. FIRST OFFICER SMITH.

4 a.m.—Wind fell light and hauled to E.N.E. Put both boats on starboard tack. Seaborn, apprentice, sick with malaria. The rest appear well and cheerful. Steering N.W. Issued usual ration.

Noon.—Position 27 deg. 11 min. S., Long. approx. 82 deg. 39 min. E. Course N. 73 deg. W. Distance 111 miles. Proceeding N.W. Wind E. by N., force 5-6, boat doing about 6½ knots.

Allchin (cook), showing signs of sickness, in spite of orders drank salt water, and is now complaining of great thirst, but I cannot satisfy him further than his ration. Day ends with rest of men all well and cheerful.

The water breakers referred to in this day's Log had a capacity of 12 gallons. It will be noticed that the ration of water was issued at 2 p.m. each day. I considered this was the best time, as the worst part of the heat of the day would be over, and the pangs of thirst were not felt to the same extent during the cool hours of the night.

During the latter period of the voyage, the two hours from noon when the sight was taken, until 2 p.m. when the

water ration was issued, seemed an eternity, and very often the men would get out their tins and ask for their drops of water before ration time had arrived. Some of them would say at frequent intervals: "Isn't it nearly two o'clock yet?" but we always kept strictly to the time, and it was not until two o'clock that the water was given out. My wrist watch was the official time-piece, and was the only reliable one kept going in the boat. It was after the water ration had been consumed that all of us experienced the greatest relief and, if I may use the word under those circumstances, contentment, and I think I can safely say that everyone thoroughly enjoyed the smoke which followed. It was then and during the nights and early mornings that we enjoyed our smokes most.

The cigarettes and tobacco proved a great boon to us, and, strange as it may appear, smoking did not seem to increase our thirst. On the contrary, when indulged in it revived everyone's spirits and added that touch of cheerfulness necessary to enable us to carry on and keep smiling.

Smoking was a very real comfort to, and was especially appreciated by, those who were sitting up at night in their wet clothes, cold, and occasionally splashed with spray. We owed a great deal to the soothing effect of the tobacco on our jangled nerves during the worst periods of the voyage.

During these first few days the attitude and cheerfulness of all was as though they had just started out on a yachting cruise. This was especially noticeable whenever the two boats were close enough for the crews to exchange banter.

The chief mark for their sallies was the sailing qualities of the two boats. My boat, it must be remembered, had much the bigger sail, and the other crew kept pointing out to us what they could do if we exchanged sails !

Mr. Robson and Mr. Fair re-caulked the cracked plank again, and this proved to be an effective repair, as the leak was easily controlled, and from then on was just sufficient to keep the watch comfortably employed in baling.

JUNE 8.

No. 1 BOAT. CAPTAIN FOSTER.

4 a.m.—Strong wind and high sea. Stopped for a few minutes to renew tack of sail.

5 a.m.—Stopped for No. 3 boat—gear giving way.

6 a.m.—Wind easing. Set sail, steering about W.N.W. true.

8 a.m.—Issued ration, milk and biscuit, and were treated by M'Green, A.B., to the following little song :

I like ham and eggs,
I like eggs and bacon,
Anybody here says I don't like 'em
He's jolly well mistaken.

10 a.m.—Dropped sail and lay to. Strong increasing wind and rough sea, boats shipping heavy sprays. Afraid gear won't stand the strain, particularly the mast.

Noon.—Lat. 26 deg. 50 min. S.

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NO. 1 BOAT UNDER FULL SAIL
From a drawing by one of the crew

2.30 p.m.—Weather moderating, set sail and carried on close-hauled on starboard tack. Wind northerly.

6.15 p.m.—Lay to, dirty weather and very black, raining at intervals.

No. 3 BOAT. FIRST OFFICER SMITH.

Day begins with freshening north-westerly wind, causing us to steer too far to the south of west. So lowered sail about 10.20 a.m. and lay to.

Noon.—Position, 26 deg. 52 min. S., 81 deg. 19 min. E. Course various. Distance 94 miles. Lying to during afternoon, strong wind and high sea.

Noticed curious thing which had not struck me before. In a small boat, the wind, however strong, can be felt, but there is no noise except the creaking of the boat and breaking sea. Funny thing.

4 p.m.—Hoisted sail and made westing till dark. During the night it rained heavily and we were able to get an extra drink of water, but it was very brackish as all our clothes and gear is saturated with spray. I was very sick for an hour after drinking it.

At five o'clock this morning of the fifth day in the boats, No. 3 boat got into difficulties, and Mr. Smith had to drop his sail to renew some of his gear. I gathered that his halyards had chafed almost through, but beyond that there

was nothing serious, and I dropped sail close to him and waited until he was ready to proceed. The wind was easing at this time, for which we were very thankful, as a long spell of bad weather would severely tax our ingenuity in replacing and repairing gear with the material at our disposal. The boats themselves could not be improved upon, and it was a marvel to us all how well they behaved and had stood the battering up to this time.

The little ditty we were treated to by M'Green, A.B., was a good sample of the cheery spirit which was manifested by all from the beginning to the end. It was like a tonic just to look at M'Green's merry red face, and his mate Scully, the veteran of the ship's crew, was always ready with a cheery word and was never idle. The greater part of the time he would be occupied in effecting repairs to the sea anchor, sails, etc., with the meagre tools at his disposal. The bit of sewing that was done had to be carried out in rather a crude manner, with rope yarn for twine and a marlin-spike for palm and needle.

R. H. James, chief steward, was always to the fore when the rations were being passed out, receiving from each man his special tin and seeing that it was passed back to him. Each man was called by name, and each had his own tin with his initials or his own particular mark scratched on it. The number of rations served out was also called aloud, and when the fourteen tins had been passed forward, there remained the six aft. At the commencement, of course, there weren't sufficient tins to go round, and during this period those who were served last were the lucky ones. There was no one waiting for them to finish and urging them

to hurry up as they tried to extract the last drop of moisture from the tin. There was a lot of satisfaction in draining out that last drop. It was only when it was realised that the tin was bone dry that it would be reluctantly put aside. Another twenty-four hours had to go by, unless we had rain, before we should taste another drop of the precious water. This, of course, applies to the water ration, for the milk ration entailed no waiting, as I will explain later. The amount of water allowed each man per day was one-third of a tin which had held 50 Capstan cigarettes, or about three tablespoonfuls.

The lid of one of these tins filled with milk was the quantity of milk for one ration, and was equal to about four teaspoonfuls. At the beginning of the boat voyage each man was given one of these lids and told to look after his own. It must be remembered that the Capstan cigarette tin, in addition to the lid, had an inner watertight cover which is opened by means of a cutter in the lid, so that though the lids were removed there was no fear of the contents of the tins being damaged. The tobacco tins, which contained $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. of Capstan tobacco, were fitted in the same way. With the cigarette tins, tobacco tins and milk tins, it wasn't long before each man had a tin of some sort as his own, and as time went on the smaller tobacco or larger milk tin was replaced by a cigarette tin, so that all were using the same sized tin, and it could be seen at a glance that the ration was the same for all.

Jimmy Fraser, fireman, in No. 3 boat, drank sea-water in the course of the day and suffered from the effects.

JUNE 9.

No. 1 BOAT. CAPTAIN FOSTER.

Early morning.—Heavy rain. All hands catching rain water. Only water for immediate needs obtained. Everything saturated with salt water. Each man catching water and mostly they were able to satisfy their thirst.

5.30 a.m.—Set sail (daylight) and picked up the other boat.

7 a.m.—Lay alongside other boat and informed them of my intention to proceed alone. We were a hindrance to each other and losing too much time, especially at night. I received from him declinations of sun, stars and planets (we have no almanac), also particulars of their intentions as regards route, each agreeing to set similar courses and to give the necessary information if either was picked up, the chances of being picked up being doubled with the greater distance between us. I was to send assistance if I arrived before them. The courses agreed on were:—Northerly to S.E. trades in Lat. 23 deg. 30 min. S.; N.W. to Lat. 19 deg. 55 min. S., and then make for islands (Rodriguez—Mauritius), Rodriguez Island, 19 deg. 40 min. S. Lat., 63 deg. 25 min. Long.

My boat, No. 1, being so much faster, I expected to make better time. The difference in speed was owing to the No. 1 boat having

a much bigger sail. With the wind strong, I had the utmost difficulty keeping company. With the sail reefed down and goose-winged both yardarms, I was running away from him, and in the necessary manoeuvres I was punishing the boat's gear too much.

8 a.m.—Wished each other the best of luck, gave three cheers and we shook the reef out, hoisted sail and carried on. Moderate W.S.W. breeze, steering about N.N.W. true, issued milk and biscuit ration.

Noon.—Lat 26 deg. 48 min. S.

2 p.m.—Issued usual water ration.

4 p.m.—Issued usual milk ration. Breeze keeping same, W.S.W. Steering a little more northerly N. by W. course. About 4 p.m. lost sight of No. 3 boat astern. Breeze dropping during the night, making little headway.

No. 3 BOAT. FIRST OFFICER SMITH.

At daybreak the wind shifted to W.S.W. and at 7 a.m. Captain Foster drew up alongside and suggested we part company and make the best of our way to destination. So gave him latitudes, longitudes, declinations, rising and setting of sun and various stars, gave them three hearty cheers, and they, being a much faster boat, were out of sight by 2 p.m.

Noon.—Position, 26 deg. 52 min. S., Long. 81 deg. 11 min. E. Course various. Distance

7 miles. Rations appear to be holding out fairly well enough to make our destination easily if I can get hold of the S.E. trades, without too much calm. Seaborn looks better. Allchin much the same.

It was impossible to catch any large quantity of the heavy rain which fell during the early hours of the sixth day, owing to the fact that the boat cover and everything else that might have been useful for catching rain was saturated with sea water, and I thought it the best policy to allow each man to catch enough to satisfy his thirst, and not to attempt to collect any for the general store. If the rain had continued long enough the salt would have been washed out of the canvas, and we could have made use of it for catching the rain, but unfortunately this did not happen. We tried some water that was caught in the canvas, but it was little better than the sea water.

The night was very black, and we were only able to see a few yards, so that it was impossible for us to sail in company and we had to lay to for the night, thereby losing many valuable hours. It was during this night that I came to the decision that it would be better for the boats to carry on separately, taking the same route. By doing this we would double our chances of being picked up, and in the event of either boat being picked up or reaching land before the other he could send assistance in the right direction.

It will be realised that, although it was impossible for the two boats to sail in company on a night as black and dirty as the one now mentioned, it would be quite possible

to carry on with the boats sailing separately, and make an approximate course by the feel of the wind. At night, too, we in No. 1 boat had much the harder task as long as the boats kept together, as, in addition to the various manoeuvres to be carried out, some one had to have his eyes always on the other boat so as to alter course in time to cut him off or come up on him again. On two or three occasions we got rather far to leeward, and in beating back we lost him in the darkness, and it was with the greatest difficulty that we got into touch with each other again. No. 3 boat was sailing along and making the course as instructed, while our time was devoted to keeping him in sight. It was a great pity that the two boats' sails were not the same size, as, if they had been, the boats being alike in size and build, it would have been a much more simple operation for us to keep together. Towing was out of the question, as with a long journey in front of these frail craft, it would have been madness to subject them to any undue strain.

As will be seen in the Log, when we had reached Lat. 19.55 S. we were to make for the islands (Rodriguez, Mauritius). This means we were to steer approximately true W. on this latitude. It will be noted that the latitude of Rodriguez is given as 19 deg. 40 min. S., this being the latitude of the north end of the island. The difference between these two latitudes being fifteen miles, and the island stretching seven or eight miles south, it would give us a distance of seven or eight miles to pass off it, if we kept along on the latitude of 19 deg. 55 min. S., and at this distance the islands should be easily visible. The latitude of Mauritius, 20 deg. 8 min. S., is thirteen miles south of the latitude we

decided to sail on, and if through any unavoidable circumstance, *e.g.* passing it in the dark, we had covered the distance to Rodriguez, but missed the island, we would be within reasonable distance for sighting the island of Mauritius.

Although I had never visited these islands before, I gathered from those who had that the reefs extended on the southern and eastern sides of these islands, and that whatever ports there were, were on the north or north-western sides. This I could easily understand, as the prevailing wind being south-east, and for the most part fresh, the north and north-west corners of the island would be the most sheltered. By sailing the boat for the north coast of the island, I would get under the lee of the land, and into the smooth water.

There was still no murmur nor complaint from anyone, nor was any question raised, though before this no doubt some of those in the boat must have begun to chafe at the delay. When I gave my decision to part company all looked upon it as the best plan to adopt, and were quite merry when arrangements were being made, shouting messages to each other, to be delivered by whoever was first in, and exchanging addresses where they could find each other on arrival home.

We parted with cheers and the chorus ringing from either boat : "Are we down-hearted ?" the answer "No" being given heartily.

I have already mentioned that for the first couple of days after leaving the ship there were very few in either boat who were not more or less sea-sick, but this only added a little to the miseries of the situation, and it seemed as

though all were more or less stunned by the recent happenings. All our thoughts and most of our talk were about the chances of being picked up. As day succeeded day this hope grew less. We kept this hope and talk up as much as we could by telling the men that the route we were on would be similar to the route taken by vessels coming to our assistance, and that they would be zigzagging looking for us. As regards our physical condition, there was no material change right through the voyage, and all kept in good health, except one or two who had a few boils. When I say we were in good health I mean that we had no disease or organic trouble, and that our sufferings were entirely due to starvation and exposure. For the first two or three days there were not many outward signs of what we were going through, but by the fifth and sixth day we were all looking haggard and drawn, and were suffering severely from the shortage of food. Combined with this, in adding to our discomfort, were the cold and the wet, and even at this early period our clothes were stiff with salt and we were raw and sore, as owing to the motion of the boat we were not able to sit still. Those of us who had heavy boots on took them off, as we were causing unnecessary suffering to those around, the least touch giving agonising pain.

When we abandoned the ship three men were sick, two of them being laid up in their bunks at the time, and these three men came with me in No. 1 boat.

It may be interesting to note that these three survived and came through the hardships very well, though one would have expected these men to be the first to go under. One of them was M'Green, who suffered quite a lot while

on board the "Trevessa" from a discharging hip bone. Two or three days after leaving the ship the wound healed and kept quite clean, and he suffered no pain with it until some days after landing, when it again broke out.

The other two men were suffering from severe colds, but two days after leaving the "Trevessa," in spite of the cold and wet, they were quite well. The additional mental and physical effort required to face the hardships evidently effected a cure.

Before the boats separated I could see there was one man in each who would probably not be able to survive the hardships. These were Jacob Ali, in my boat, and Jimmy Fraser, who was with the chief officer. They struggled hard for a time, but they were the first to succumb. Mussim Nagi, who was the other member of my boat's crew that died, was at this period and for some time after one of its most cheerful members. His collapse was more sudden than that of Jacob Ali, and was accelerated by an old complaint, piles, which developed rapidly, and without doubt he must have suffered agonies. With this added to the other hardships, it was little wonder that he gave way and drank salt water as he lay in the bottom of the boat. If he had been a younger man—he was fifty-seven—I firmly believe that he would have survived the trip. Until the illness overtook him he was one of the most willing workers, and showed wonderful spirits. The wear and tear of the rest of us was very gradual, and for the first week you could not say that one looked worse than the other.

From close personal observation I was soon able to determine the capabilities of those round me, and in what



CAPTAIN FOSTER



R. H. JAMES

ON BOARD THE "TREVESSA"



M. SCULLY

way each could be called upon to give of his best. The more able among the crew soon showed up prominently; no one was spared, and every one responded willingly when called upon.

Mr. Robson and Mr. Fair helped tremendously by the calm, matter-of-fact way in which they took the whole position, and in the way they made their various suggestions. The sound practical support they gave me was incalculable.

The experience that Michael Scully and Mr. Arthur Tippett had had in handling boats was of great value. Here were two whom I could always depend on to take the tiller in bad weather. Mr. Tippett, being a certificated officer, was not only able to take the tiller and handle the boat, but could steer a course as well by day as by night, keeping the sun at the angle required by day, and by the same method during the night, using the stars in place of the sun. M. Scully, although he could handle the boat, had, of course, to be continually instructed while he had the tiller, by the orders to "Keep her up," or "Keep her away," and "Steady," when she was back on her course. Not only was it a big strain for him to keep his eyes on the sun during the day in order to make the course and keep it on the right angle, but he had not a very good judgment of angles. Of course, with the sun travelling round as the day wore on, the angle in relation to the boat's course kept on changing, and this change had to be allowed for, which entailed considerable skill and knowledge. At night, too, he had not the necessary knowledge of the stars, and with flying clouds, as was the case on most nights, we would frequently have to change the star by which we steered. Owing to this,

Mr. Tippett was usually called upon to steer during the night, and Scully during the day.

Others who assisted me in the steering were Mr. Robson, Gordon Lister, and D. Lamont, wireless operator. Gordon Lister was about the most restless member we had amongst the crew. Although I had placed all hands on watches, he was continually offering his services whether he was on watch or not, either to steer the boat, or to relieve whoever was baling.

R. H. James, chief steward, though not so restless as Lister, was always eager to help. His work was of a general nature, but none the less effective. To explain his attitude towards me, it may be said here that he had sailed with me for some years, and although I have not said so until now, it was a great encouragement to me to see the implicit faith he put in my ability to bring the boat through. This he did not express in so many words, but he implied it in many ways, and the cheery optimism he showed throughout, and the manner in which he gave his views to the others, came very high in our list of assets.

Another optimist, whom I have spoken of elsewhere, was Paddy M'Green.

I could not have chosen a crew that could have given me better or more loyal support than those who went through this severe test with me.

I used to wonder at the time, and I have often wondered since, which was the harder, to be one of the crew who had merely to struggle along day after day, relying absolutely on those who were using their skill and knowledge to bring the boat to safety; or to be one of those who had the responsi-

bility of bringing the men through? This is a problem I have not yet solved. The various difficulties and adversities we met with were tackled and overcome each as they arose, I will not say cheerfully, for it was just a grim struggle. Every accident was met and countered before another could put us in a worse plight, and each man was called upon to give his last ounce in the way in which he was most capable. Those who were stronger or more skilful always rose to the occasion when called upon, and never gave a hint that they thought they might be doing more than those who were not so well equipped.

VII

THE CAPTAIN'S BOAT

JUNE 10.

2.30 a.m.—Calm. Rain clouds appearing to windward. Dropped sail and called all hands out to catch rain water. A few light showers. A few managed to catch a little with handkerchiefs, squeezing them into a cigarette tin.

3.45 a.m.—Sky clear. Light S.W. breeze. Set sail and continued on voyage. Squared the sail away: tack made fast to end of stretcher out to windward, steering about N. by W. true, sail full.

8 a.m.—Issued milk and biscuit ration.

Noon.—Lat. 25 deg. 24 min. S.

2 p.m.—Issued water ration.

4 p.m.—Issued milk ration.

In the evening and till late at night standing by to catch rain water. Cloudy, overcast sky. Only a couple of small showers. No water caught. Wind died away. Boat drifting.

By the seventh day we were looking rather a disreputable crew, which is not to be wondered at, considering that there

Stand by Port Breaker	In use first Star Board
9 th in barrel	9 1/4
10 th	9 1/4
11 th	9 1/4
12 th	9 1/4
13 th	9 1/4
10 th	9 1/4
11 th	9 1/2
12 th	9 ^o
13 th	8 1/2 ^o
14 th	8 1/2 ^o

were no facilities for washing or shaving, but it also had its lighter side, for many were the complimentary (?) remarks passed upon each other's personal appearance. Washing in salt water was of no use, as it only enhanced our piratical appearance by leaving a coat of salt behind, but our long hair and the beards and moustaches that were sprouting on our faces, though not beautiful, were an advantage rather than otherwise, as they helped us considerably in catching and holding rain water.

The prospects of being picked up were freely discussed every day, and we all had by now come to the conclusion that we were getting well out of the beaten track of vessels and that we had to rely entirely on our own efforts to reach land. This prospect did not seem to daunt anyone, but we still kept a sharp lookout for a sail or smoke.

Chief Engineer Robson and Third Officer Tippett took charge of the boat when I was resting, though to rest in any way was usually difficult owing to the constant "kick" of the boat, and it was arranged that someone should always sit alongside whoever was steering, to assist him in case of need and also to keep him awake.

It is quite easy to keep awake for two or three hours during the night when you are out for a few hours' sail or for a bit of fishing. In our case, however, sailing this small boat day after day, it was not so much that the man who was steering actually went to sleep as that he was inclined to sink into a semi-comatose state, steering the boat automatically, and at times erratically. That this could happen became apparent quite early in the voyage when we were all comparatively fresh, and from the start during the

night there were never less than three of us at one time on strict watch in the after end of the boat. There would occur periods of silence when none of us felt very much like conversation, and then our thoughts would wander a few thousands of miles away, until a flap of the sail would remind us that there were things at hand that must be attended to. This was why we arranged that at least one person sat by and talked to whoever was steering, so that those in immediate charge of the boat should be always fully on the alert. Every yard lost by bad steering meant so much further for us to go to reach land.

Even in the later stages of the voyage, when the weather was so bad that we were all necessarily much more on the alert, we still kept to the same plan. The danger of something serious happening to the boat was much greater then owing to our extreme weakness, but still we found it difficult to keep our thoughts from wandering. The talk, however, did not require as great an effort as in the calmer weather, and was confined almost entirely to the business in hand. While whoever was steering attended to the handling of the boat and making a course, another would keep his eyes on the seas coming along astern, and would give the warning, "Look out, here comes another beauty!"

Mr. Robson had a never-failing topic of conversation when he was on watch with Mr. Tippett. He would ask question after question about the stars. Which one was Tippett steering by? Which would he take when he lost that one? He would have bearings given him by various other stars round about, so that he had stars at all angles to the boat and did not need to keep his eyes on the one

ahead to know whether the boat was off her course or not. Long before this voyage was finished he had a good working knowledge of the stars and a better idea of navigation than he had ever hoped to have.

While the boats were in company no precautions of this sort were necessary, as up to the time we parted we were always quite on the alert, and had to be, in order to keep in touch with the other boat in the darkness. The semi-comatose state into which we were apt to fall later on was the result of exhaustion and strain, as even with the watches no one ever really got a rest. In the very bad weather, when the danger was very serious, we had to call up every ounce of our strength, and the strain was terrible. It was no wonder, therefore, that when conditions eased off ever so slightly, there was an inclination to relax, and that it was only by the greatest effort of will that we could keep going.

It may seem strange that there was this tendency to relax in weather which was so bad that it was necessary to warn one another to "Look out, here's another big one coming!" but there is great truth in the proverb, "Familiarity breeds contempt." We were forced to be at sea under conditions which would ordinarily keep any boats of the size of ours in harbour, we were driven by sheer necessity to meet the difficulties due to those conditions as they arose, we gained confidence as we went along and became more or less used to these conditions; then the moment that there came any lessening of the strain the struggle to keep alert began.

One of the chief topics of conversation amongst us for the first few days was the nature of the accident which could

have happened to the ship, and on this we could only theorise. The two theories that carried most weight were that the ship strained and ripped a plate open, or that she might have struck submerged wreckage. The latter we largely discounted as, even in the bad weather encountered, we should have felt it if we had struck anything heavy enough to cause the large opening which must have been made in the ship. Whatever it was, it could not have happened very long before we had to abandon the ship, for considering the weather we were experiencing, she was behaving beautifully up to late on the 3rd of June. Another theory we talked over, but which we did not take seriously, was that the 'tween decks might have collapsed and pulled her plates in.

JUNE 11.

Calm, occasional light puffs of wind from southward. Keeping sail and making the most of any breeze and steering north and west.

8 a.m.—Issued usual ration—milk and biscuit.

Noon.—No lat. Overcast sky, sun obscured.

2 p.m.—Issued water ration.

4 p.m.—Issued milk ration.

Dull day, sky overcast all day, fairly cool. Had two good baths and others followed suit. All recognise now the benefit, especially wetting head and neck and keeping them wet. All sucking small lumps of coal and buttons.

The latter helps a little to keep our mouths clean. For some days all have had a horrible taste in the mouth, and the mouth and tongue thickly coated with white slime. Some tried washing their mouths out with salt water, but I advised them not to.

Sky still overcast, hoping for heavy rain to-night. Two half-breakers of water left. All preparations made for catching rain water. Various tin chutes made from empty biscuit tins, two large leather chutes—the top and bottom of a suit case—and half a boat cover.

Morale of the crew very good, and all quite cheerful. All made up their minds to a long trip and hoping for the best. During the night calm, overcast sky. Occasional puffs keeping sail and making slight headway.

One of the crew to-day made a dipper—a tin tied to a piece of wood, and while one lays his head over the gunwale another dips water up to pour over his head and neck.

Our baths on this, the eighth day, consisted of giving ourselves a good sousing with a handkerchief from a bucket of sea water, then pouring over the remainder, while someone else would bale up a couple more buckets of water and pour over us. One would then sit in the bottom of the boat and bale water over oneself with the tin. Bathing the head and neck was done frequently, and while the water was running over one great relief was felt.

Old Michael Scully was the only one who did not have these baths, and would not pour any water over his head or adopt any of the expedients the others were using to relieve thirst. His reason for this was that he thought that if he felt the cold water running over him, or drew it into his nostrils, he would not be able to resist the temptation to drink it. For a man of his age his fortitude and cheerfulness were remarkable.

Early this morning we saw a whale not very far away going in the opposite direction, and during the day we saw several "Portuguese Men-of-War." These look like a kind of jelly-fish, and we caught one, though we did not think it would be an addition to our menu, nor did we try to use it. Part of this animal is submerged and the other part projects above water and acts as a sail. One of the men gave us quite an interesting little lecture about it, but to what extent it would be endorsed by the scientists I should not like to say. What he told us was to the effect that the "Portuguese Man-of-War" had a chain about two fathoms long attached to its body, and at the other end of the chain there was a small crab. This crab, in addition to towing the jelly-fish had a further use as a hunter. When it caught anything, the jelly-fish would pull up the chain, and they would share the meal. After the meal the crab is lowered again to take up its duty. Part of this was borne out by the fact that when we caught this pretty piece of purple jelly, we found it had this length of chain attached. If there had been a small crab at the end of it, it had dropped off before we got the chain to the surface.

To face p. 78.



JONES AND SCULLY AT RODRIGUEZ



MICHAEL SCULLY, A.B., AT RODRIGUEZ

JUNE 12.

Same weather and conditions early morning.

7 a.m.—Light W.S.W. breeze, making N. by W. course, sky overcast, no rain during the night.

8 a.m.—Issued milk and biscuit ration.

Breeze did not last very long. Calm again and making no headway. This morning Mr. Fair (third engineer) introduced an addition to the bath, and this was to sit with your under-clothing saturated and let them dry on you. Only three have tried—Mr. Fair, Mr. Robson (chief engineer) and myself. They are a bit chilly, but it is quite comfortable to sit in wet things with a mac' round your shoulders. Most of the crew are now taking baths, and all are very often soaking the head with water and also keeping on with the other means for quenching thirst—breathing sea water into nostrils—sucking buttons, etc.

Noon.—Lat. 23 deg. 46 min. S.

2 p.m.—Issued water ration.

4 p.m.—Issued milk ration.

Miserable night, calm, making practically no headway. Jacob Ali (fireman) wandering in his mind.

During the ninth day a lot of fish spawn was seen floating near the surface, and several members of the crew caught some and began to eat it. I then got a few pieces, and after

draining off the salt water, tried it and found it cooling to the mouth, but on breaking one of the balls, I found that its inside appeared to be full of salt water. Considering that to eat the stuff would do more harm than good, I advised the others to leave it alone. This advice they took, though they kept looking at the cool morsels with longing eyes.

Not many days after we had parted from No. 3 boat, I noticed that Donald Lamont was very busy with a strip of canvas, teasing out the threads. I asked him what he was trying to do, and he said that he was making a fishing line. I did not think it would be of much use, but lent a hand, and we spent quite a lot of time getting out the threads, twisting them into threes, tying them together and adding to them the two or three bits of string and sewing twine that we could find. In this way we managed to get a line a few fathoms long, and then Donald Lamont bent up the bar of his tiepin for use as a fish hook, and we left it towing over the stern, with a little bit of white rag on the hook for bait. This, of course, was in the calm weather. As a fishing proposition it was hopeless. It would have had to have been a very small fish indeed that that line could have held, but if the line did no other good it helped to pass the time. While we were in the calm weather we saw quite a lot of tiny fish, and Donald Lamont got the idea of a fishing line from seeing them.

Jacob Ali during the night needed close attention. He frequently expressed his intention of going to the galley to make tea and coffee, but eventually sang himself into a comatose state. The tune he sang was a native one, and

was not the sort to liven anyone up, but in spite of its monotony it did not have an ill effect upon the crew.

JUNE 13.

6 a.m.—Had all hands on deck in the cool. (At night, except those on watch, all hands kept under cover out of the cold air, and huddled together for warmth. The covers are the boat cover cut in two, one-half for'ard and the other half aft.) The white men, carpenter, A.B.'s etc., were in the fore end of the boat; the coloured men immediately aft side them, then a space between the two after thwarts for baling, and the officers in the stern. The arrangement worked very satisfactorily.

6.30 a.m.—Still calm. Started pulling the boat, two oars each side. All hands much better in consequence. The feeling that something is being done. Practically no headway being made. Jacob Ali in his senses.

8 a.m.—Issued milk ration, but most of crew refused biscuits. The water ration is the minimum to sustain life. Impossible to eat dry biscuits. Some of the crew are soaking theirs in salt water against all advice. Considering the circumstances everyone is very well and cheerful. All suffering severely from thirst. All keeping very good discipline.

Noon.—Lat. 23 deg. 27 min. S. Issued extra ration of milk. About 10 a.m. a light

easterly breeze sprang up. Took in oars and making slight headway about N.W. true.

2 p.m.—Issued water ration. Water lasting out very well, but we'll want to supplement it very soon, the ration being only enough to sustain life.

4 p.m.—Issued milk ration. Very little breeze all day; making very little headway N. and W. Doing the best we can with the light puffs. During the night similar weather, and we had a quiet night. Still no rain.

It was in the cool of the mornings, during the calm weather, that the oars were used in order to give the men exercise and to help with the impression that we were making progress, and to prevent their brooding as we lay motionless with the sail flapping against the mast. It was usually about 10 a.m. that light puffs of breeze would come along, and the oars would then be dispensed with.

Anyone with the slightest knowledge of boats, even of light ones, and of the small oars or paddles that are used with them, knows that it requires a fair amount of physical effort to move the boat through the water. In our case, with a heavy lifeboat and a large crew adding to the weight, and with heavy ash oars 14 ft. long, it was practically impossible for the men in their weakened condition to propel the boat by the oars. On the first night we used the oars to keep the boat's head to sea; at other times they were used only in cases of absolute necessity, to help to keep the boat in a position to ride the seas. The sail was the

one thing we had to depend on to carry us along to our destination.

When the natives were under cover for the night they were inclined to chatter and squabble with each other the whole night through. This was quite understandable, as owing to their cramped position all huddled together between the thwarts; the least move made by one would cause agony to those around him. The natives who happened to be on watch would add their quota to the noise by requesting those underneath in no uncertain manner to "shut up"; but if at any time the noise got on anyone's nerves a little, and they were ordered to keep quiet, they would do so. Immediately the cover was taken off and they were able to sit up, which was possible for them in the warmer atmosphere during the day, they forgot their little troubles. As soon as the first streak of dawn was seen, the irrepressible Paddy M'Green would say: "Take the cover off the band, sir?" and at a nod he would start to pull away the canvas and call on those underneath to come up and get some fresh air.

Some of the men found that when they tried to eat their biscuit they could only chew it, and through lack of saliva it could not be swallowed. After chewing it for a while you could blow it out of your mouth as dry dust, and the ration of water was much too precious to mix with the biscuit. From the start I had told them to drink the water as slowly as possible, to take it in small sips, roll it round their mouths, and swallow it gradually, and by this time there was quite an amount of competition to see who could make their water ration last the longest.

JUNE 14.

Still no rain and no breeze. Got the oars out again to give the men something to do and to get boat ahead. Very little progress made. All hands getting weak but keeping wonderfully cheerful. They swear at each other occasionally, and that lets off a bit of steam. Most of the crew take every available opportunity to run water over their heads. A few have been over the side (coloured men). None of the whites try it, as there are sharks about. (We have seen a few, but they don't keep along with the boat for any length of time.) The baths and keeping the head wet are a great relief. Overcast sky again to-day and raining heavily astern and on starboard horizon. Hope the breeze will carry it along to us soon. We need the rain badly, and also the wind to carry us along.

8 a.m.—Issued usual milk ration. Very few taking biscuits. A few of the coloured men are soaking their biscuits in salt water, although told not to do so. Hope it will have no ill effects and that I'll succeed in getting all crew in safely. All very well up to now, but weak.

11.30 a.m.—Commenced to rain. Down sail and all hands catching water. With this shower caught quite a nice little drop of water. When it passed we up sail and put the oars out to pull across the track of a big squall we

could see coming up. Got about the middle of it as it broke, and I took off my coat, which was rubber lined, and spread it, lining up. We had a good downpour of rain and caught enough for everyone to have a really good drink. Am very wet now but feel better than I have done since I got into the boat. All hands feeling quite cheerful and ever so much better. Going to it now with a good heart, and quite convinced we shall get to port all right. All interested in the progress the boat is making. At present a light S.W. breeze, making 2-3 knots on a N. true course. Will carry on on that course till I make a breeze that we can sail along into westward, hoping to make S.E. trades. Lat. to-day noon approx. 22 deg. 50 min. S.

1.45 p.m.—Issued milk ration.

2 p.m.—Issued water ration. Still signs of rain, but clearing to windward.

2.30 p.m.—Good S.W. breezes increasing during the night; making good headway N.N.W. course.

6 p.m.—Issued milk ration.

10 p.m.—Wind S.E., changed tacks. During the night light showers, but not enough to catch any water.

It will be seen from my entry at 10 p.m. that it was then we struck the S.E. trades, which was the prevailing wind

we wanted to make to carry us along to the Mauritius group. We had had to make 60 miles more northing than we expected to get these trades, for, as will be seen from my record of the arrangements made between the two boats before separating, we had hoped to make the S.E. trades in Lat. 23 deg. 30 min. S. Instead of that, we must have been in something less than 22 deg. 30 min. when we met them, the latitude at noon on this day being 22 deg. 50 min. S.

During the rain on the eleventh day, as is shown in the Log, we managed to collect quite a lot of water, as we were getting more expert at it, and, as the biscuit tins were being emptied, we were able to obtain more tin chutes. We found now that by removing our caps, pulling the hair down over our faces and allowing the rain to run through it over our faces, down a tin chute held under the chin into a small tin, quite a lot of water could be caught. We could fill the tin very quickly in this way, and the water running over our heads benefited us greatly. Scully, with his oilskin coat on, would stand with his back to the rain, with the bottom edge of the coat turned up to make a drain, and was able to get a good amount of water in that way. We found, as before, that by the time the salt was washed out of our canvas, the squall was over or nearly so; or during the squall we might get the canvas again souped with spray, which would necessitate a fresh washing out before it could be used for catching water.

The tin chutes that we used were pieces of tin about ten inches square, with the bottom corners turned in, leaving a lip in the middle which would easily fit inside a cigarette

To face p. 86.



HOW THE CHUTES FOR COLLECTING RAIN WERE USED

tin. As little as possible was turned in, for we wanted to present as large a surface as possible for the rain to beat on.

It will be noticed that to-day the milk ration was issued at 1.45 p.m. inside of noon. The reason for this was that at noon all hands were busy catching rain water. The milk was there when we wanted it, but not the rain, which was too precious to miss.

A few of the coloured men in the calm weather, when there was no way or very little way on the boat, had their baths by slipping over the side of the boat and hanging on to the lifelines. These lifelines are on all the ship's boats and hang in loops, reaching to within a short distance of the water line, right round the boat, being secured to rings about two feet apart. It is generally recognised at sea that sharks will not attack a coloured man as readily as they attack a white man. Whether this is correct or not, I do not know, but I have seen many coloured men in the East who have been maimed by sharks. We did not see many sharks, and those we did see did not come very close or remain long in company.

VIII

THE CAPTAIN'S BOAT (*continued*)

JUNE 15.

1.45 a.m.—Strong wind and high seas (sea rising very rapidly with the wind), took a reef in sail. Making good progress. Squally and light rain showers.

6 a.m.—Heavy clouds working up. Hauled up a point to lay across them. A few minutes later we got the rain. The heaviest to date. All hands got a good drink and some was saved from the sail and a piece of canvas (boat cover) we had spread, and this was put in a spare biscuit tank. All feeling very cheerful, and the position is much brighter.

8 a.m.—Issued milk ration and biscuits to those who wanted them.

Noon.—Lat. 21 deg. 47 min. S. Issued milk ration. Fresh S.E. wind and high seas. Reefed sail, making W.N.W. true. In good hopes now of making the land early next week. Hope the wind will hold and that we'll get some more rain. With more water we'd be quite comfortable. Still feeling the effects of

lack of water. The rain we had is enough to put new life in you temporarily. Personally, my mouth was as dry as a limekiln again before noon.

2 p.m.—Was very glad of the small water ration issued just now. Just have to keep on smiling. I reckon we have 500-600 miles to go yet, but have no means of getting a longitude. I hope we are further to the westward.

4 p.m.—Issued milk ration. Stiff breeze all night, making good headway, W.N.W. course.

It will be seen that at 6 a.m. this morning we were able to collect some rain water in the sail and boat cover, and that we put it in a spare biscuit tank. The reason we did not put it into the water breaker was that it was slightly brackish, and we did not want to risk spoiling our supply of pure water.

Another method besides those already described, by which we caught quite a lot of rain water during the journey, was by cutting little grooves with a penknife in the seats in the after end of the boat, so as to lead the water inwards to the cockpit. A groove was also cut along the edge of the cockpit with a couple of little notches downwards, under which tins were held to receive the water. It will probably have been noticed from frequent entries in the log that the sail was always down while we were collecting water, but as a rule I would not allow it to be used for this purpose, as there was a risk that in their eagerness to secure as much

as possible of the precious water, those scooping it off the sail with their tins would tear it, and leave us with reduced means of making progress. The effect produced by drinking rain water was very satisfactory and reviving, and it is almost impossible to describe how much more cheerful it made everyone.

It would also be very hard to describe the eagerness with which the crew looked on while an observation was being taken at noon, the sextant put away in the box, and the few figures scribbled on a piece of paper which would give us the latitude for that day ; or the smile which would greet the news that we were getting along all right. The mere sight of the instrument seemed to give them added confidence, and each day after I had worked the latitude I would smile as though I was absolutely satisfied with the result, and nod to those around. This would have the desired effect on the crew, who were so eagerly watching. The pieces of paper we used to make the calculations on were the strips of thin cardboard that were round the cigarettes inside the tins. As each tin was emptied, these strips were passed over to me.

We would always start taking the observation in good time, as with the huge sea that was running for most of the time it was rather a difficult operation. It was only occasionally, when we were on top of a sea and there was not a bigger one between, that we could see the horizon, and then it was only a short glimpse. With the boat diving and kicking it was more than one man's job, for it had to be done sometimes standing, sometimes kneeling, or sitting on something that had been raised as high as possible, while

two men held on to steady me in the position. It was quite a relief when the "alright" was given and the sextant put back in the box.

JUNE 16.

Strong S.E. wind and high seas, squally. Some fairly heavy showers. Crew catching rain water. All hands got a good drink and felt much better for it.

8 a.m.—Issued milk ration. During forenoon had heavy rain squalls. Everyone had their fill of rain water and some was put in spare bread tank. All hands wet through with rain and also spray during the night. Very uncomfortable and cold, but all feeling much better and more cheerful. I have felt great benefit from the water. This morning ate two biscuits (better brand than we had been using previously). Up to then I had only had about half a biscuit since we left the ship. I had been relying on the milk, but stomach turned against that now. All getting on very well considering the conditions.

Noon.—No sun. Latitude approximately 20 deg. 38 min. S. Issued milk ration.

1 p.m.—Boat broached to and half filled. Dropped sail and kept before wind and sea under bare pole. Steering fairly well; as many as possible baling out. All hands got a good soaking to add to the general cheerfulness

of the situation. Lay to during the afternoon and caught some more rain. Feeling fine now.

4.15 p.m.—Issued milk and water ration.

5.10 p.m.—Weather moderating considerably. Set sail and proceeded.

7.30 p.m.—Squally. Dropped sail and reefed down and goose-winged each yardarm.

8 p.m.—Squall over. Set sail, steering about W.N.W. true. Weather moderating during the night.

The excellent behaviour of the men was exemplified when the boat broached to at 1 p.m. on the thirteenth day. Most of them jumped to their feet when the boat heeled over, and the sea broke over the weather gunwale, but on a shout "Keep down" all dropped down in the boat, and on the order to bale they seized whatever was handy and set to work, so that we had the situation in hand immediately.

At the time of this mishap there was a huge sea running, and with the bigger and more dangerous seas we would put the helm up just as the boat started to take the sea on her weather quarter, so that she should pay off and run along with it. On this occasion a curl of the sea caught the boat before she began to pay off, but the helm had met her in time, and we escaped with nothing worse than a good soaking. It was an anxious moment when the sea broke over the gunwale, but as has been said, no real harm was done. Our greatest concern was lest the salt water might get into our water breakers.



NO. 1 BOAT WITH SAIL REEFED AND GOOSE-WINGED

From a drawing by one of the crew

The goose-winging of the sail referred to was done, in addition to the reefing, in order to reduce the spread of sail, so that no undue strain might be put on the mast. It has been explained previously that there was a weakness where the mast was stepped, and it required constant nursing. If it had not been for this weakness there were times when we might have carried a bigger press of sail, but I considered it more prudent to decrease the spread and run no risks of the mast being carried away. By goose-winging I mean lashing the sail in a foot or so at each yardarm, a piece of old canvas being placed underneath the lashing to prevent any chafing on the sail.

JUNE 17.

6 a.m.—Moderate breeze. Shook out goose wings and carried on.

7.30 a.m.—Opened two tins of biscuits and only about twenty good in both, and by good luck most of those Spiller's. There were a few bad in the first box of Spiller's opened (water had got at them—tins not strong enough). Plenty of biscuits in the boat. Still a large bread tank full.

8 a.m.—Issued milk and biscuit ration. I had no milk, but I did very well with one of the Spiller's. Breeze freshening and sky still looking a bit squally.

10 a.m.—Wind and sea increasing. Goose-winged the sail again.

10.20 a.m.—Set sail. Breeze too good to

lose time. Making good progress. Hope we won't have many more days. Sky clearing off—sunshine. Clothes off drying. Feeling more comfortable than with wet clothes on.

Noon.—Lat. 19 deg. 39 min. S. Shaping course west true. Issued milk ration.

2 p.m.—Issued water ration. Managed to get clothes dried this afternoon in spite of a sousing now and again with spray.

4 p.m.—Issued milk ration. Fresh S.E. trades and rough sea. Making as near as possible west true. With less sea we could shake goose-wings out of sail. Making good headway and I hope to sight something shortly.

The observation at noon showed that we had passed, and were slightly to the north of, the parallel of latitude 19 deg. 55 min. S., along which I had agreed with Mr. Smith to sail, in order to reach the Mauritius group, and accordingly our course was altered to west true.

This was to be our course until we made a landfall, but naturally, wind and weather and the difficulty of judging from the sun and stars the exact direction to be steered, caused us to run to the north or south of it at times, so that the actual course steered was but seldom due west.

Sometimes the boat must have presented a motley appearance, for whenever the weather was fine enough we were all in various stages of undress. Articles of clothing of every description would be lying about in the boat where they could catch the rays of the sun or find a little bit of

breeze to dry them, and others would be hanging from the backstays and around the mast. The effect was not exactly decorative, but we were very glad if at the end of the day when we put the things on again they were only damp.

We had a platform of lifebelts in the bottom of the boat on the port side, in the section kept free for baling, to place the tins of biscuits on, as this appeared to be the place where they would be least subject to damage. In spite of this, however, and although the greatest care was taken, they all got very much battered. A lurch of the boat and the man who was baling might be thrown against them, or the same thing might happen while the rations were being passed along, or again when men tried to take up the best positions for catching rain water. It was not much wonder that these tins suffered and that we lost a considerable amount of biscuits. The damage to the biscuits was caused by the sea water getting into the tins.

During the battering these tins got, the edges of some of them were started, in some cases not sufficiently to be apparent to us until we came to open them, and we always opened the most battered-looking first. We were unable to keep them covered, for the only covering in the boat, the canvas boat cover which had been mentioned before, was wanted, especially at night, to give some degree of shelter to and keep the life in the men.

One of the accidents of this eventful voyage cost us dear. Two or three days after leaving the ship, in hammering up the screw-cap of one of the biscuit tanks, the screw-cap broke away, making this tank no longer air- or water-tight. The biscuits from it had to be used first, and we packed

as many as possible into the other biscuit tank, which was kept till the last. If that tank had not been damaged, we could have refilled it from the tins and should probably have lost very little or none of our stock. We had to pay a pretty big price for the little bit of extra energy used in hammering up that screw-cap, but as things turned out the loss of the biscuits did not materially affect our condition.

When issuing the water ration the greatest care was always taken that no spray would get into the bung-hole of the water breaker, which was open at the time. The bungs always had a piece of cloth round them to make them fit tight, and someone was always sitting by the breaker ready to put the bung in or cover the bung-hole as soon as there was any sign of spray coming over. On one occasion, when the weather was very bad and the spray was continually lashing across the boat, we dropped the sail and lay to while the rations was being issued, and we did not consider the time wasted, for the loss of even a pint of our precious fresh water would have been a calamity.

This fourteenth day was mostly spent in drying our clothes in the sun, and rubbing sore feet with storm oil, but using the oil sparingly. Some of the crew suffered a lot from pain in the feet, which was probably caused by defective circulation of the blood in them, and these experienced great relief from rubbing their feet with oil. This was another bit of useful knowledge that I had gained in my previous boating excursion, when we all suffered considerably from frostbite or "trench feet." My feet on that previous occasion had swollen until they were large round balls, and I believe it was due to my rubbing them

with oil, and to the time I spent chafing them with my hands that I was saved from losing toes, as a good many did on that occasion.

In addition to rubbing our feet with oil we warmed them as much as we could in the sun, and occasionally gave them a good rubbing. Except that our feet were swollen and very tender for a good while afterwards, we suffered no after effects in this respect. Some of the crew were suffering from salt-water boils.

On this day, too, I was about to throw overboard a small dressing-case, now reduced almost to pulp from being continually saturated with water, into which I had put some biscuits which had previously been damaged by sea water, when T. Gomez (fireman) thought he would like the case for future use (! ! !). I gave it to him and told him to throw out the contents. In cleaning these out he discovered a comb, button-hook and nail file, which he washed and passed aft, thinking they would be more useful to me than to him. The comb was put into immediate use and handed round to all in the boat, everyone using it and thoroughly enjoying the sprucing up. It was particularly pleasant to get the salt out of our hair.

This dressing-case and the suit-case previously mentioned had been filled with clothes on leaving the "Trevessa," and the contents proved very welcome to those who left the ship scantily clad, and would have suffered very severely from the cold without the extra covering I was able to provide.

Another leather case, containing certain ship's papers and the men's discharge books, was small enough to be

placed in the locker in the stern of the boat, and also proved valuable as a repository for small personal belongings and papers which the men entrusted to my care.

JUNE 18.

Fresh S.E. trades and high sea. Carrying on under same conditions. Still a bit squally, but sky looking better. Hope will have more moderate trades. Could make better progress with less sea. Had a much better night than last night. No one sleeping much. Not much room to kick about. All hands pretty well battered. Lips cracked previously, but have healed up since we had the heavy rain. Mouth still horrible with white slime.

8 a.m.—Issued milk and biscuit ration. Had a bad headache for the last twenty-four hours, but easing off a bit now.

Noon.—Lat. 19 deg. 41 min. S. Made course W. true. Issued milk ration. Forenoon strong S.E. trades and rough sea. Making good headway. Afternoon weather moderating. Strong S.E. trades but much less sea. Making good progress west true.

4 p.m.—Issued milk ration.

5 p.m.—Weather moderating. Shook out goose-wings. Single reef now. Doing well.

11 p.m.—Fierce squall, dropped sail (catching rain). Steering before wind and sea under bare pole.

11.30 p.m.—Squall passed. Up sail and proceeded. To-day had all rowlocks removed and passed aft.

By the fifteenth day all hands were very much the worse for wear, but sticking it well except for the two who eventually died. We all seemed to be wearing very much alike, but I was very much afraid that a few of the less robust of the crew would collapse suddenly. My headache was due to my eyes, and caused by constantly looking at the sun while I was steering, in order to keep it on the proper bearing for making a good course.

It will be noticed that every time we were caught in a squall we dropped the sail. There were various reasons for doing this, the most important of all being that everybody in the boat could devote their whole time to catching rain water. Had we kept the sail up, one man's whole attention would have been required, standing by the halliards, and others might have got in the way of the sheet and impeded whoever was handling the boat. Moreover, we could not afford to take very big risks with the gear. Our case was a proposition altogether different from sailing the boat in a race, when there would be other crews all round to render assistance in case of an accident happening. What caused us the greatest concern throughout was the shortage of fresh water. Had any serious accident happened to the boat we might have had our fresh water spoilt by sea water getting into it, if nothing worse, and what would have been our position if we had suffered serious damage to the mast or sail? The reviving effect of the rain water

caught was well worth the sacrifice of the few miles we lost in distance while the sail was down and we were catching it.

The value of this water cannot be estimated by any except those who have had to go without it for a long time. In addition to the reviving effect it had upon us all, we wanted it badly to clean our mouths, which had been for some time thickly coated all round with white slime. The amount of water we obtained from time to time, even when it had been raining heavily, was never sufficient to do this thoroughly, or else the slime formed again so quickly that we were never entirely free of it. We spent quite a lot of time trying to get rid of it, and could scrape it easily off the tongue, and at times some even tried washing their mouths with salt water. All were strongly advised not to do this, as the temptation to swallow some of the cool water when it was in the mouth would be very hard to resist.

The rowlocks were passed aft so that no weapons, or anything that could be used as a weapon, were left about the boat, except a couple of sheath knives and a small marlin-spike with the A.B.'s. I had this done merely as a precaution, and in order to be quite on the safe side, though all hands were quite cheerful and keeping perfect discipline.

JUNE 19.

Midnight to 4 a.m.—Frequent fierce short squalls. Dropped sail during the squalls and steered before wind and sea under bare pole. All hands catching rain water.

4 a.m. to 8 a.m.—Not much wind, but sea rising. Steep sea and squally weather. Light

breeze between squalls. Sail reefed and goose-winged. Not making much headway between squalls.

8 a.m.—Issued milk and biscuit ration. During forenoon strong S.E. trades and rough sea. Weather looking considerably better. Not squally. Sky clear.

Noon.—Lat. 19 deg. 56 min. S. Issued milk ration. Afternoon strong S.E. trades and rough sea, making about W.S.W. true. Hope will make land soon. Not very satisfactory that we can't work up a position. We are on a latitude and will have to exercise patience till we have run it down to Rodriguez Island. If we could only have less sea so that we could put a bigger press of the sail on. Too risky as it is. The mast is none too safe. The heel has been lashed and shored up since the first day sailing. The tiller head was broken about the same time and that is lashed up, and the compass is useless. All the steering has been by sun and stars.

4 p.m.—Issued milk ration. Should see something soon. Hope so.

10 p.m.—Fierce squall. Dropped sail and steered before the wind and sea—bare pole.

10.30 p.m.—Squall passed. Up sail and proceeded.

11 p.m.—Fierce squall. Dropped sail. Rough sea.

One of the things about which very little has been said hitherto was our stock of matches. It took us several days to learn that these would have to be very carefully nursed, but the lesson was learnt in time. To start with, several of us each had a box in our pockets, but with the soakings we got these boxes soon fell to pieces and the matches were spoilt. We were very lucky though that on the whole we lost very few of the matches. For the rest of the journey the only man who carried any matches in his pocket was Mr. Fair, who had a water-tight metal box, and another box was kept handy inside a cigarette tin. Great care was taken, too, in the way we used them, and it is wonderful how many lights you could get from one match. One match would light cigarettes for all cigarette smokers, who were in the majority, and one match, too, would light three pipes. We managed this by getting one pipe well alight and inverting it over another and drawing on the two together, perhaps tapping a little of the lighted tobacco into the second one. The same process was gone through for the third. It will be seen that in this way we could light an indefinite number of pipes from the one match, but all these operations had to be performed under the shelter of the canvas.

On the sixteenth day the condition of the two firemen, M. Nagi and Jacob Ali, caused great anxiety. Efforts were made to liven them up, but with very little success. The continued soaking with salt water and also with rain, and the cold they necessarily suffered, was too much for them in their weakened condition.

Owing to the continued drenchings, and the fact that

the above two men were now very ill, all hands were very quiet, but still optimistic as to reaching land. We were now coming to the hardest part of the struggle, and it was a case of the survival of the fittest, not in the sense of every man for himself, but, though all were working together and a cheery word was always met with a smile, it was clear that it would be the physically and mentally fittest who would come through best.

The gradual failing of the men's strength was apparent as time went on in the amount of effort required in handling the sail. To start with, when the sheave was in good running order and the men were fresh, it was a comparatively easy task for one man to haul the sail up. Later on several men were needed to do it, and during the last few days after June 21, with the additional handicap of a dead sheave for the halyards to be pulled over, it required as many men as could lay on to the halyards. It was more their weight than their strength in pulling that got the sail up at all.

For the last two days baths had been discontinued. In our weakened state the weather seemed to us to be bitterly cold, much too cold for us to strip. We, however, still continued pouring water over our heads with the dipper.

IX

THE CAPTAIN'S BOAT (*continued*)

JUNE 20.

Horrible night. A succession of strong squalls till 4.30 a.m. All hands soaked to the skin and very cold. High sea running.

3 a.m.—Jacob Ali died.

5.30 a.m.—Hoisted sail and proceeded. Wind about E.N.E. Running before it about W. by N. true.

7 a.m.—Jacob Ali buried. We don't know how far we are from land. Ugly sunrise this morning and heavy sea running.

All hands had a good fill of rain water during the night and were all ready for the 8 a.m. ration of milk and biscuit.

Hope we'll be able to continue throughout the day. Have instructed the crew to keep a sharp look-out for land and promised the first one to see it a full tin of water. Don't expect to have a very pleasant day. The sky is clear and the sun out, so we should be able to get dry. Up to the present we haven't shipped

any water since we up sail this morning. Getting along at good speed. Wind strong and high sea running.

Noon.—Strong wind and cross sea. Lat. 20 deg. 10 min. S. Altered course, steering N.W. true. Afternoon strong trades. Making good headway. No clothes dried to-day. Spray flying over the boat.

5 p.m.—Altered course W.N.W.

Sunset.—Wind and sea decreasing and prospects of a fine night.

Midnight.—Altered course.

Jacob Ali died on the morning of the seventeenth day. He was an Indian, and another fireman, Tom Patchoo, who was of the same religion, performed certain rites according to that religion before his burial.

During the night, in the heavy squalls, M. Nagi drank two tins of rain water and smoked a cigarette, and in the afternoon swallowed some milk and water now and again. He was very weak, however, and I was afraid he would not last many more hours. Both he and Jacob Ali were given a little extra milk and water occasionally while they were at their worst, though we could ill afford it, and there was little hope of saving them. It just helped to make the last few hours a bit easier for them.

The want of exercise was proving one of our greatest hardships. With the lurching and quick motion of the boat, it can be easily understood that we were not able to take any exercise, as it was dangerous for any man even to

stand up. Apart from this, there was not the space. We were sore from constantly sitting down, and yet there were not many inches for us to move in. All sorts of experiments were tried to get relief, such as sitting on a coat rolled up, or on a lifebelt, and occasionally changing places with each other. It was always during the day that we felt this discomfort most, and during the daytime also we tried to get the greatest possible value out of the heat of the sun. Except in the calm spells we welcomed every bit of sun we could get.

Although it has been said we had no exercise, there was plenty of physical effort required during the whole course of the voyage, such as the work with the sail, steering the boat, drawing the water for baths, and dipping up the water for pouring over our heads, the last two being almost continuous throughout the day, and also there was the work required by the continuous baling. But all these activities affected the body and arms principally, and it was from the hips downwards that we seriously felt the strain of our cramped position.

JUNE 21.

Had a fine night and all hands had a better rest. Clothes dried on us and all feeling fine this morning.

6.30 a.m.—Shook goose-wings out of sail. Looks as though we'll have a fine day with the easterly wind fresh during the middle of the day. Not a lot of wind now. A bit more sea coming up since daylight.



FOURTEEN HOURS AFTER LANDING

Left to right—N. V. ROBSON (First Engineer), CAPTAIN FOSTER,
T. FAIR (Third Engineer)



No. 1 BOAT'S CREW

With the exception of the Captain, First Engineer, and Scully

8 a.m.—Issued milk and biscuit ration.

8.30 a.m.—M. Nagi (fireman) died.

10.30 a.m.—Buried M. Nagi.

11 a.m.—Sheave in block at masthead carried away. Lowered mast and put two strips of leather through the sheave hole (no more sheaves or blocks) to keep the halyards from chafing. Overhauled all gear and re-set stays. Wedged heel of mast and lashed it well.

Noon.—Re-set sail, Latitude 20 deg. 11 min. S. Must have had a bad course during night or there is a strong S. set here. The steering most likely at fault. Last night, as it was fine and clear and stars all out, I lay down and had a good sleep. Just giving the course and assured she was on it. The course I gave was west (midnight).

Fine weather now and warm. Not enough breeze. All reefs shaken out of sail and course N.W. by W. from noon. Milk ration issued at noon.

Afternoon.—Light north-easterly breeze. Making very little progress on W.N.W. course, clouds coming up from S.W.

4 p.m.—Issued milk ration.

9 p.m.—Dropped sail. Heavy rain squall from S.W. Caught quite a lot of rain water.

9.30 p.m.—Up sail to get across another rain squall working up.

10 p.m.—Dropped sail and all hands catching rain water. Everybody has a good fill of water, and some saved. All fit to carry on for a while again. The rest of the night very black and dirty. Not a lot of wind but heavy black clouds and slow drizzly rain. Not getting much from it after the first of the rain burst. Laying to. Lost sense of direction and thought it better to drift than chance running off before a S.W. breeze. No stars showing.

That the observation at noon showed us to be considerably further south than we intended is an illustration of the difficulty of keeping on an accurate course when steering by the stars and with no compass to assist. We were sixteen miles south of the parallel along which we wished to steer, and over thirty miles south of our latitude of the previous day.

Mussim Nagi appeared to be brighter in the early morning of the eighteenth day. At 8 a.m. he took some milk and water, but was very weak, and at 8.30 he died. It was a great blow to Ali Nagi to see his brother die; he would have nothing to do with his burial, and there was never the same life in him afterwards, nor did he carry out his duties with the same spirit. Previous to his brother's death he had been cheerful and fairly lively. His greatest trouble seemed to be that it was *his brother* and *an Arab* who should have given in, while those of other nationalities endured.

Probably no leather suit-case has ever proved as valuable

as did the one which was placed in this boat. In addition to its use as a suit-case, it was utilised for making chutes to catch rain water, and on this day it proved of still greater value when strips of it were used as a substitute for a sheave to keep the halyards from chafing at the edges of the sheave hole in the mast.

All through this expedition Mr. Robson and Mr. Fair were able to demonstrate in a very practical manner the numerous uses to which the few tools at their disposal could be put. It was these two who carried out the various repairs which had to be made from time to time, and the tools they had at their disposal were an axe, axe-head, meat-chopper and pocket-knife. With the axe and pocket-knife a spare tiller was cut out of an oar and fitted over the tiller's head, and a better fit could not have been turned out in a carpenter's shop. This tiller did not last very long; the grains of the wood ran fore and aft, the same as the hole cut out to fit over the tiller head, and although we had put a lashing on each end of the hole, it soon split. It served us well, however, through a part of one of the worst bits of weather we encountered, and while it was in use we were able to effect a really efficient repair to the other.

JUNE 22.

Wind freshening in the early morning and sea rising. Steering before it (sail reefed down ready to hoist).

2 a.m.—Hoisted a corner of the sail to help her along over the seas and running easy.

7 a.m.—Hoisted sail, running before a heavy sea, making north as near as we can. Dull day and strong wind S.E. true.

8 a.m.—Issued milk and biscuit ration. Hope will have better weather before the day is out.

11 a.m.—Shipped some heavy water in a squall. A huge sea running. Dropped sail and steered before wind and sea. All hands catching rain water. Got a glimpse of the sun between passing clouds. Last seen 11.47 a.m.

Noon.—Approx. Lat. 19 deg. 30 min. S.

12.30 p.m.—Rain easing off. All hands last night and this morning got their fill of rain water and managed to save some. Feel fit to go on for a good while now.

12.45 p.m.—Issued milk ration and the evening's biscuit, so that they could have it with the rain water they had caught (biscuit ration split, half in morning and half in evening). Personally I feel more comfortable than I have done for a long time and quite fit. We have all the discomfort of wet clothes, and with last night, to-day and the prospect of to-night in wet clothes, it won't be exactly a pleasant thirty-six hours. Hope we'll have a bit of fine weather to-morrow, so that we can dry off. It wouldn't do us any harm to have it a bit finer to-night.

Still showery 3 p.m., and heavy overcast sky. Not so heavy as it was, but bad enough. Squally and big sea running.

3.20 p.m.—Rain stopped and more lofty appearance of clouds. Sky overcast, no sun, set sail port tack and proceeded as near as we could guess W.S.W. true. A bit more light in sky at sunset. It appeared as though we were making very nearly that course. Still a big sea running, and it looks as though we'll have some more squally weather. On the whole it looks better and we might have better weather to-morrow.

5 p.m.—Issued milk ration. Getting along very well now and not shipping much water. The little that comes over doesn't make much difference. Perhaps we'll be able to get dry to-morrow. Hope so. Prospects for the night not exactly ideal.

9 p.m.—Dropped sail for a few minutes during the height of a squall, sky clearing and weather improving. Steering W.S.W. Strong southerly wind. Carried on for the rest of the night.

The seas on the nineteenth day, in addition to soaking everyone through and through, also half filled the boat with water. Although after the rain there was a great deal of discomfort, due to the extra soaking we had got, no one minded it at all for the effect of drinking the water we were

all able to catch was to put renewed life and energy into everybody. It would produce a striking contrast to the quiet grimness of perhaps only a few hours earlier, when we had been waiting and hoping that something of the sort would come along. There was never any amount of "nerves" shown. The steadier ones greatly outnumbered those who were in any way inclined to be nervy.

I do not think that the coloured men would have been so ready to disobey orders and soak their biscuits in sea water if one of the white crew had not said, though he ought to have known better, that sea water could be drunk without ill effects. This man maintained that when he had been in a boat, after being torpedoed during the war, sea water had been drunk with impunity, and by saying this, as well as by showing an inclination to grumble, he gave us a good deal of trouble.

Another member of the crew, who shall be nameless, caused us a lot of trouble by not playing the game and drinking surreptitiously some of the storm oil and the spirit out of the useless compass. Up to the time of this lapse he had been behaving splendidly, and he suffered severely for his fault. The oil which he drank was crude and dirty, and afterwards he was very ill indeed. In fact, if we had not looked sharp after him and forced him to keep going, he would probably have collapsed completely and died.

If these facts were not put on record this narrative would be incomplete, but it speaks volumes for the loyalty and discipline of the crew that this is all the fault I have to find.

We had every reason to be thankful for the time Mr.

Tippett, third officer, had spent sailing boats in Mount's Bay, for he turned his experience to good account, and proved conclusively throughout the whole of this trying time how valuable was the knowledge he had gained of handling boats in all weathers ; and the various little stories he told us of fishing expeditions in the Bay greatly helped along the tedious hours.

Very often during the trip we would all join in singing a little chorus we had heard Sir Harry Lauder sing while in Sydney, the first line of which was : " There is somebody waiting for me." We also frequently sang the choruses of other popular songs, for the singing seemed always to cheer us up.

Lamont was by this time feeling the effects of exposure very much, being only a youngster and without as much physical strength as the others. To start with he took his full share in whatever there was to do, helping with the steering and so on. He was still keeping a watch, in fact continued to do so until we reached land ; but he had to be helped to sit upright and to keep in a sitting position. In spite of his weakness, however, he never grumbled or uttered a protest.

JUNE 23.

Keeping on W.S.W. course as near as possible. Rough sea but less wind. Sky clear and sunshine. Warm in the sun but a cold wind. Not much drying yet. Throwing quite a lot of spray over. The baling has to be kept up day and night, though there isn't

so much leak as to cause anxiety. The water is easily kept down. The caulking done by Mr. Robson and Mr. Fair earlier in the trip effective.

8 a.m.—Issued milk and biscuit ration. Rations cut again now to one biscuit a day and milk twice instead of three times. The noon ration cut out. Will open last case of milk this evening, and have half a bread tank of biscuits left. Of water, we have half a breaker and four inches in other. This should last us till we reach land, even if we had to carry on to Madagascar. Hope we make Rodriguez Island soon. If not, will work down to about 20 deg. 5 min. S. and run on the parallel.

10 a.m.—Southerly wind, still fresh and rough sea. Very little cloud about. A little round the horizon. Till noon strong S.E. wind and rough sea.

Noon.—Lat. 19 deg. 7 min. S. Altered course, making S.W. by S. Sailing as close to wind as possible.

2 p.m.—Issued water ration.

4 p.m.—Strong wind and high dangerous seas. Down sail, dropped sea anchor over stern—two oars lashed together with remains of sea anchor on tail in centre. Kept mast up and steered before it. Shipped some heavy water before we lay to and at the sea anchor before we used the oil. A cigarette tin of oil

on each quarter with a small puncture for the oil to escape. Had a bad night again. All hands wet through and cold.

In the afternoon of this day the seas were very high and steep, and we decided that the safest measure to adopt would be to ride out the storm to a sea anchor. The sea anchor which we had been using as a drag at night time when keeping company with the other boat was in a rather dilapidated condition, and alone did not offer sufficient resistance to keep the boat end on to the seas, and I used the two oars to supplement this old sea anchor so as to keep the boat in the required position. Using the sea anchor is not the same as anchoring a boat in a harbour or roadstead, so that she remains in the one place with her anchor on the bottom. The sea anchor is just a contrivance floating in the water and causing a sufficient drag to keep the boat end on to the sea and prevent her falling off into the trough as she drifts. A lot more work was entailed when we used the sea anchor than its name suggests, for the oars had to be manned and used frequently to help it keep the boat end on to the seas, and even so we shipped quite a lot of water as the seas broke. To obviate this we used the oil as described in the Log, as oil has a great effect in smoothing the surface and preventing the seas breaking, and quite a small quantity is sufficient for this purpose. If you care to put it to the test you will find that one drop of oil will spread over a large area of water. As I was riding this storm out, stern to the sea, I put a tin aft on each quarter, and the oil spread on each side and left a wider path of oily surface

than if we used only one tin over the stern ; moreover, had we used only one tin we should have had to let the oil flow more freely to make it effective. Of course, there is not always a plentiful supply of covered tins available in a boat as was the case with us. In this instance I used a cigarette tin each side as being the best means of controlling the distribution of the oil.

The oily track we left behind us was about 15 feet wide, quite wide enough for our purpose, and the efficacy of the measure was amply proved as we went along and shipped no water after we started to use the oil. Our hardest work was getting the boat to ride before the seas, leaving a straight oily path astern, so that the seas following up astern were smoothed in the wake of the boat.

Several of the men by this time were suffering severely, but it was astonishing how they were sticking it out without complaint. Some of them were now taking very little rest and volunteering their services to relieve others, Gordon Lister, A.B., being prominent in this respect.

One of the apprentices, too, was very fidgety. For the first few days after leaving the ship he had been subdued, but afterwards he crawled all over the boat, and though it was satisfactory to see a youngster so full of life after his very trying experience, we had to take steps to prevent his disturbing the others.

The reduction of the milk ration produced a growl from Gomez, who, as has already been said, did not at first understand the reason for it, but he was quite satisfied when matters were explained to him.

Both Gomez and Tom Patchoo were of an uncertain temperament, at times very optimistic, at others utterly cast down, the latter being perhaps more inclined to despondency than Gomez. Tom Patchoo, though shipped as a fireman on the "*Trevessa*," proved himself an excellent sailor, one of the best in the boat, and showed up very well during the most dangerous periods. When we landed, Tom Patchoo was physically one of the strongest and Gomez one of the weakest of us.

John Lopez and Mount Lee were the two men in whom I saw the least change or sign of physical weakness. In the "*Trevessa*" Lopez was a quiet, reserved man, who never spoke to anyone unless spoken to, and carried out his duties efficiently and without any fuss, and he continued the same throughout the boat voyage. Mount Lee was of a different type, always happy and prepared to be friendly, responding to a glance with a broad smile, which never failed him during all the time that he was in the boat.

To the great disgust of those sitting near enough to overhear him, one of the crew chose as his topic of conversation, one night while he was steering, the relative merits of the different kinds of mineral waters and fruit cordials! He talked to me for nearly six hours on the subject. His talk reminded the others forcibly of the shortness of drinking water and of pleasures they had to forego, but I did not feel inclined to check his flow of conversation, as we had to talk in order to keep on the alert, and any other topic was less interesting. I ought to add that this member of the crew was not at all "light-headed." He wanted the information to help him to stock out to the best advantage

when he joined his next ship. He was very fond of this particular kind of refreshment.

JUNE 24.

7 a.m.—Tried to sail again, but a dangerous cross sea, and gave it up at 8 a.m. and hauled up a part of the boat cover on the halyards and set each side out on backstays and ran before the wind. Doing very well on that and keeping the boat fairly dry. Enough water coming aboard to keep everybody soaked. Wind E.

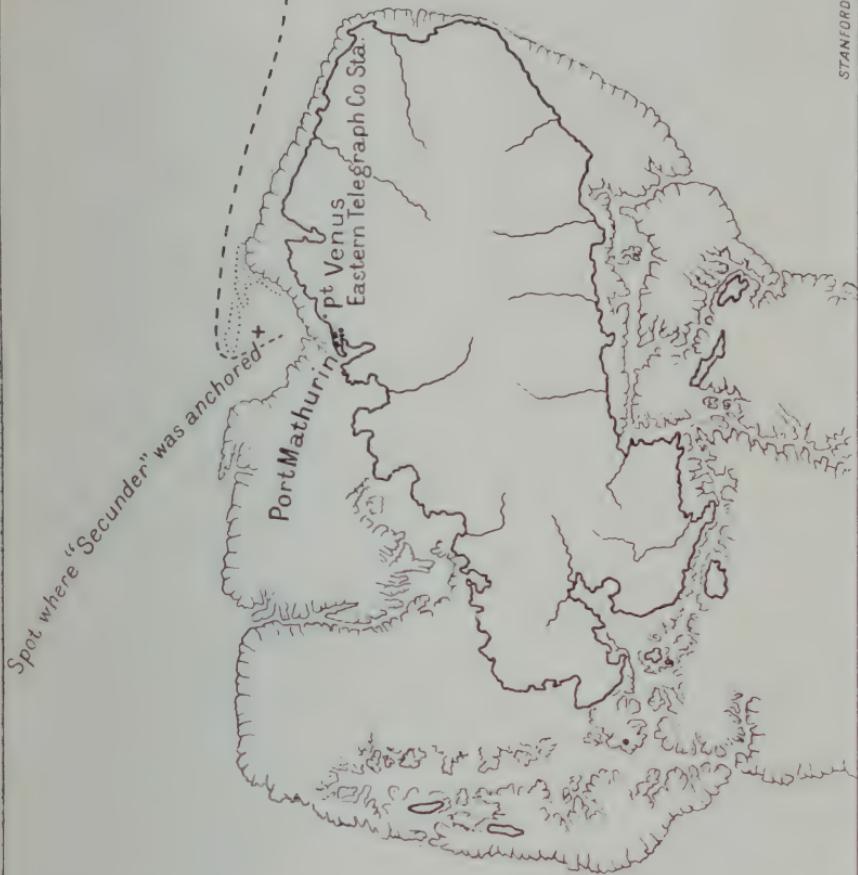
8 a.m.—Issued milk and biscuit ration.

Noon.—Lat. 19 deg. 1 min. S. Hope will be able to make some southing and get on the latitude of the islands.

3.45 p.m.—Weather moderating. Set sail, steering about W.S.W. Wind strong and big sea. Making as much southing as possible and all hands getting a good soaking of spray. My intention is to haul more to the southward as the wind and circumstances permit.

5 p.m.—Sea moderating and wind going more to E., making about S.W. by W. Steered S.W.—W.S.W. till 9 p.m. Wind had freshened so much that we had to free a bit to W.S.W.—W. by S. and carried on that till midnight. Another horrible night, cold and wet.

Owing to the bad weather and the necessity of keeping before the wind, we had run nearly fifty miles north of the



RODRIGUEZ
ISLAND

N



parallel along which I wished to sail, and this fact caused me a good deal of anxiety. It was of the greatest importance for us to keep as nearly as possible in the latitude of the islands, as they would not be very far away now, and we did not want to miss them.

We were having a hard tussle to work the boat to the southward. The sea was so steep and dangerous that it was only possible to run before it, and according to my calculations we had already covered the distance to the island or there was very little left of it for us to do, so that it was important to make as little westing as possible.

At the same time I did not want to tell the others, as it would only have caused worry and uneasiness, so I kept the tiller myself and, therefore, did not have to give orders or let anyone, except Robson, know that I was keeping the boat back. I wanted height in the sail but not spread. With the sail goose-winged I got this, but the sail was so baggy that I could not keep near the wind and therefore adopted the device of using the boat cover to keep the boat before the seas, but travelling as slowly as possible.

At other times, when the more dangerous seas had passed, I would run across the others as close to the wind as possible and occasionally, though not so frequently as to arouse suspicion, I would luff right into the wind and check the way of the boat, always paying off, however, in time to run off on the bigger and more dangerous seas.

I am afraid the other occupants of the boat put these manœuvres down to sheer carelessness and were worried at the strain being put on the gear; but as skipper I had to put up with their looks—nothing was said—

and also share their anxiety that something might carry away.

By the twenty-first day all the crew were showing signs of the heavy strain of the three weeks battering. The condition of our clothes could be better imagined than described, after the continual soakings with salt water, partial drying and soaking again. The discomfort of this soaking with sea water was nothing compared with the bitter cold which we felt when we got soaked with rain water ; the latter, however, was counterbalanced by the reviving effect of what we got to drink.

As day succeeded day and the possibilities of being picked up grew less, we tried to recall if there had been any similar case of boats being cast away so far from land. The only one that any of us had heard about was the mutiny of H.M.S. "Bounty" in the Pacific Ocean. This was not exactly a parallel case, but it was the nearest approach we could think of, but there was nothing much in the way of sustained conversation throughout the voyage. In the middle of the day there would be a bit of animation when we took the sun and worked the position and discussed it for a while.

JUNE 25.

Till 4 a.m. strong N.E. by E. wind. Making about W.S.W. and shipping heavy sprays. A miserable time.

4 a.m.—Dropped sail for a few minutes in heavy squall.

5 a.m.—Dropped sail again. Very rough sea and heavy squalls. All hands catching rain water. Our clothes could not be any more wet. Hope we have some relief from this soon. The cold more than anything is taking the heart out of the men. Running before the wind and sea with a piece of boat cover spread for a sail. Keeping ahead of the seas and going along all right.

8 a.m.—Issued milk and biscuit ration.

10.15 a.m.—Up sail and proceeded S.W. by W. Light wind and heavy sea. Frequent squalls during morning. Dropped sail while they were on. No rain worth considering after 9 a.m.

Noon.—Lat. 19 deg. 30 min. S. Course S.W. Light E.S.E. breeze. Sea decreasing and not so steep. Still squally. Hope we'll see the finish of it to-day. Frequent squalls during afternoon and breeze freshening. One big squall at noon. Sail down till 1 p.m. In the evening steering about S.W. except in squalls (squalls not so heavy), when we ran off a bit steering about W. by S.

9 p.m.—A heavy squall and sail down for half-an-hour. Very little rain.

Midnight.—Nasty sea running; compelled to drop sail. Steering before wind and sea with a corner of the sail lifted.

A few days before sighting the land a bo'sun bird joined

us and accompanied the boat each day for the rest of the voyage. This bird is white with a long pointed tail, and we quite enjoyed watching him fly round the boat, sometimes very close over us. We took this as a sign that we were getting nearer land, and a sharp look-out was kept for birds that usually keep near the shore. Disappointment was occasioned now and again when a bird which was thought to be one of these proved only to be one of Mother Carey's Chickens.

As a rule, Mother Carey's Chickens are not seen near land, nor at sea in fine weather, but they are frequently met with in mid-ocean, and are very much in evidence in bad weather. In every ocean, when it is blowing hard, these little birds may be seen flying along in the hollows between the seas, and it is probably from this fact that they got their name of Stormy Petrel. When they were recognised it was a double disappointment to us, inasmuch as they not only indicated bad weather but also that we were still far from land.

Apart from this, not much bird or fish life was seen during the whole course of the voyage, except a couple of whales in the distance, an occasional shark, some flying fish and some very small fish seen during the calms. One day the spray over the boat brought with it a tiny flying fish about one-and-a-half inches long. This little visitor did not suggest a big addition to our rations, and it was handed over to Tom Patchoo, who lost no time in according it decent burial. By his expression I should say he thoroughly enjoyed the tiny morsel.



SUPERINTENDENT'S BUNGALOW, E.T.C., RODRIGUEZ

The light first seen by the boat was on the verandah of this house



S.S. "SECUNDER" ANCHORED OFF PORT MATHURIN

X

THE CAPTAIN'S BOAT. LAND AT LAST

JUNE 26.

Running with a corner of the sail lifted. The clew on the halyards and each side of the sail set down to the gunwale. A nasty time of it again.

6 a.m.—Shipped a heavy sea over the stern. Found the rudder head was breaking away. Got an oar out on each quarter to steer by and a couple out to help keep her stern to sea. Hard work. We aren't as strong as we might be. We cut the top of the sternpost off level with the top of the gunwale and cut the sides of the rudder down to make a new top. All finished and rudder shipped again at 8.45 a.m. Fixed the tiller head, too, made it a better fit and more secure.

8.45 a.m.—Running before it with a bit more sail up. The clew nearly to the masthead and the yard lashed across the gunwale. Keeping ahead of the seas and going along fairly comfortably. Just shipped one drop amid-

ships during the forenoon and most of that was scoured in by a corner of the sail on starboard yardarm as she rolled down.

9 a.m.—Issued milk and biscuit ration. We have all managed to dry off quite a lot this morning, and are very thankful for it, too. Hope will manage to get dry to-day. The weather not settled yet, though it looks better. A strong wind now and heavy sea and squally, but no rain passed over the boat.

Noon.—Lat. 19 deg. 35 min. S. Steering west, running before wind and sea.

2.45 p.m.—Sighted land. Carpenter first to see it. Bearing W.S.W. about fifteen miles. All hands very excited and a different feeling apparent. Set sail and steering right for it, and should be handy there before dark. Gave the carpenter the tin of water promised to the first man to sight anything. The water ration had been issued as usual at 2 p.m. Don't expect to get ashore to-night, as I don't know anything about the coast. Will try for it at daylight in the morning unless very favourable circumstances to-night. There is a good moon and that is a great assistance. On this expedition I have had the very able support of a real old sailor, M. Scully, A.B. He is a real white man, and you would go far and not find a better sailor. The officers all gave of their best, and take second place to none in their

cheerfulness and ability to cope with the situation, and showed the spirit required to bring the expedition to a successful termination, the dangers and difficulties of which they fully realised from the start.

As we rounded the north end of the island (plain in sight in the moonlight), we got out of the heavy sea and could approach the land close. About 6 p.m. made a light which afterwards proved to be a light on the E.T.C. (Eastern Telegraph Company's) station, and a little later we made the anchor lights of the s.s. "Secunder" (Mauritius Government steamer). As we closed we shaped a course to pass close astern of the s.s. "Secunder," deciding, as we had come so far, we'd go ashore and not board the steamer. As we were passing we were recognised as a strange craft and hailed by the "Secunder"—a local fisherman shouting to us that we were running on a reef. We dropped sail and started to pull towards the steamer, and a few minutes later were met by a small shore boat with the fisherman on board. I gave him two men, M'Parlin (carpenter) and Tom Patchoo (fireman), to pull his boat, and he came aboard our lifeboat to pilot us through the reef. We had previously sailed through the outer reef. By good luck we had made the N.E. passage.

8 p.m.—We lay alongside the landing stage

and were met there by the Rev. Silarsah, who despatched various messengers for assistance. There was soon enough to help us along. We found we had lost the use of our legs, though that wasn't apparent to us in the boat.

At 4 p.m. I gave each man one tin of water and half a tin of milk, and at 5 p.m. another tin of water and some biscuits. About 7 p.m. I gave the dipper over and R. James, steward, passed water out till all hands had had three tins each.

Arriving ashore I told those who were assisting us not to give the men too much water. The doctor (Rodriguez) was in attendance. The weakest cases were given a small drop of brandy and water, and the rest of us a small tot of rum. The nearest place being the guard-room of the police station, we were attended to there while accommodation was being prepared for us. While that was being done, I gave Mr. Hanning, the resident magistrate, a list of the names to telegraph to Hain, St. Ives, and also gave him particulars of the other boat—route, etc.—and asked him to have the information sent out and assistance sent. All the men were soon comfortably housed and were receiving every attention.

The land we had sighted proved to be Rodriguez Island, one of the Maserene Islands, 344 geographical miles



Looking West from the Jetty



Looking East from the Jetty

PORT MATHURIN, RODRIGUEZ

eastward of Mauritius, Lat. 19.41 S. and Long. 63.23 E. It is about thirteen miles long, east and west, and from three to six miles broad, north and south, with a total area of about $42\frac{1}{2}$ square miles.

All round the island is a fringing reef of coral, studded with islets, on the eastern side not more than 100 yards wide, while to the westward it extends for nearly three miles. To the north and south it forms a flat platform, which is dry at low water.

There are only two openings in the reef making harbours on the island suitable for larger craft—on the south coast Port South East, and on the north coast Port Mathurin, which we eventually reached.

On the morning of the last day, when Mr. Robson was busy hammering open the screw cap of the biscuit tank, he gave himself a severe blow on the thumb nail, discolouring it. He suffered agonies from it, and in his weakened state he must have felt it severely. Although he felt very faint for a while, he refused to touch a drop of water, though all were anxious for him to have it. He would not take what the others could not have, though he admitted afterwards that he could have done very well with it at the time.

Who could describe our feelings when the carpenter first shouted that he could see land? All hands shouted "Where?" "What is it like?" etc., and those with the sharper eyesight described its appearance to those who were not so well gifted. They cheered and shouted and took it for granted that this was the island we had been making for, and were very eager to know whether we could land that day. I knew nothing at all about the island, but

told them I would do my best to get in there and get ashore.

On approaching the island, M. Scully, as the most experienced seaman, J. M'Green, A.B., and Tom Patchoo, fireman, who had very keen eyesight, were on the look-out forward, while I instructed Mr. Tippett, third officer, at the tiller, as we ran along the coast. The sight of land had acted as a wonderful tonic, and everybody showed renewed strength and energy. As there was a good moon we were able to get close in, and negotiated successfully the passage through the outer reefs into the smooth water in the anchorage of Port Mathurin.

The water and provisions remaining at this time were—one inch of water in the breaker we had been using, and the other one, which had not been touched, still half full. Of biscuits and milk there was sufficient to last for another week. In addition to these we had 1000 cigarettes and 2 lbs. of tobacco. The tobacco and cigarettes were very valuable, and had helped considerably to keep us all in good spirits.

The light which we saw at 6 p.m., and mentioned in the Log as being on the Eastern Telegraph Company's station, was actually on the verandah of the superintendent's house. It was the beacon that guided us in through the outer reef, and if it had not been for this light, we should probably have remained at sea for another night. It was not until some time after we had seen this light on the verandah that we saw the anchor lights of H.M.C.S. "Secunder."

We could not have had a more excitable pilot than the

fisherman who came on board the boat and undertook to guide us through the inner reef and shoals. Long before we reached the jetty he was shouting for the police, who he knew were stationed a few yards away from it. His shouts were first heard by the Rev. Mr. Silarsah, who happened to be on the spot and made eager inquiries as we were drawing in. He sent various boys flying in all directions to get assistance, so that by the time we were alongside the jetty, a large number of the inhabitants had gathered there and were ready to assist us ashore to the guardroom of the police station, which was the nearest shelter. On the way there we met Mr. Hanning, the resident magistrate.

The news of our arrival spread rapidly, and we were soon receiving every attention. Dr. Mangenie was soon on the spot, and our eager helpers were made to understand that it would be mistaken kindness to allow anyone to over-indulge in either food or drink. The greatest care was taken in this respect. The scene in that little guardroom will not easily be forgotten by any of those present. Chairs and seats seemed to appear from nowhere in the twinkling of an eye and were arranged round the sides of the room. On these the crew were seated, with the exception of the few weaker ones who were laid on the floor in the corner. And what a disreputable lot we must have appeared ! The quiet guardroom was soon changed to a scene of intense excitement and bustle. Scores of eager helpers came crowding in, messengers were being sent in all directions, completing arrangements for our comfort. There was a buzz all round as question after question was asked and answered, though our appearance, more than what

we could tell them, convinced them of the struggle we had been through.

Mr. Crouch, who lived not far from the jetty, immediately telephoned the news to the Eastern Telegraph Company's station. Every assistance was promptly offered to the magistrate, and the staff immediately set about doing what they could to assist in a whole-hearted and practical manner. The members of the mess lost no time in providing hot-water bottles, blankets and other comforts. In fact, everything necessary was speedily forthcoming.

Mr. Hanning soon made arrangements for the accommodation of the crew. The four weaker members were placed in hospital. Myself, the chief engineer, third officer, and third engineer were accommodated in his own house, and the remainder of the crew in a dwelling which had recently been vacated by one of the staff of the E.T.C. The house was in close proximity to the doctor's quarters, and as there is only one doctor for the whole island and its 7000 inhabitants, this arrangement avoided taxing him unnecessarily. It was not long before everyone was comfortable.

I should like to be able to paint a picture of what we looked like as we sat in our wet and dirty clothes, unkempt, unshaven, and encrusted with salt, amid the dainty and comfortable surroundings of the drawing-room of the magistrate's house, chatting and drinking tea, our protests that we would spoil the furniture being indignantly shouted down.

That tea was the first hot drink that had passed our lips for a very long time, and I certainly cannot describe what

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VIEW FROM THE E.T. CO.'S OFFICE



PORT MATHURIN, RODRIGUEZ, NATIVE HUTS

this first hot drink meant to us after our hard struggles since leaving the ship twenty-three days before. Seated in that comfortable room it was nearly impossible for us to realise that only a few short hours before we were having a terrific fight with the elements, struggling through our worst night since we left the "Trevessa."

When I went through my earlier boating experience during the war, I hoped that that was the last of its kind, but it would appear that a Higher Power directed things otherwise, and the experience I gained then, not only in boat handling in bad weather and in the various means of combating thirst, but also the knowledge gained with regard to rationing—the latter in this instance being the bare minimum necessary to sustain life—stood me in valuable stead, as was amply proved. Except that we were weak and emaciated, and had to be very careful not to over-eat or drink, our condition was healthy, and owing to this our recovery was so rapid that four days later we were quite ready to take the next step on our journey towards home. Thanks also are due to the great care taken of us during those four days by our kind hosts on the island.

XI

THE FIRST OFFICER'S BOAT

THE account of the rest of the voyage of this boat is compiled from information given me by Mr. Smith, and what I have learned from others who were in the boat; but I naturally cannot deal with the events as fully as I have been able to in the case of my own boat.

The arrangements in No. 3, Mr. Smith's boat, were in general very similar to those which have already been described for No. 1 boat. In the stern were the officers, apprentices and the two cooks, amidships were the coloured firemen, and in the bow were the boatswain and seamen.

Watches of four hours each were also arranged, the chief officer and two of the apprentices taking turns at the tiller, while Mr. Mordecai, the second engineer, kept watch on the other boat, then when their watch was done they turned over to Mr. Hall, the second officer, who took charge of the tiller with the other apprentices, and Mr. Edwards, the fourth engineer, looked out.

Forward the boatswain, Sumner, and the seamen attended to the sail and kept a general look-out, and the firemen baled in spells of two hours each, so as to keep the boat free of water and as dry as possible.

The water and provisions were distributed between the bow and the stern of the boat. A breaker of water, all the biscuits and the milk were forward in charge of the boatswain, and a breaker of water and the cigarettes were kept aft under the special care of the engineer officers.

The discomforts suffered by the crew were the same in both boats, the close quarters rendered movement almost impossible and rest of any sort very difficult. No one ever slept soundly, they merely dozed, often tormented by a dream which occurred again and again, that they were just on the point of having a long cool drink of water; but they always woke up before the drink could be taken.

Hunger was not much felt after the first four or five days, but they were always thirsty.

All were confident that they would eventually reach safety, but could give no reason for this confidence, and it was perhaps as well that no attempt at all was made to reason it out; had it been tried, it could only have emphasised the smallness of the chance of ultimate rescue.

After the first few days a sort of coma appears to have settled on to many of the crew, and whatever was done was done more or less automatically and without thought, but there is no question that the general feeling of confidence in pulling through helped very much to keep them going and to carry on.

Mr. Smith kept a Log up to June 15th, the twelfth day after the abandonment of the ship, but during that night water came aboard and spoilt all the paper available in the boat, soaked his "Epitome of Navigation," and even

got into his sextant case, so that there was no material left on which a Log could be kept.

The entries in his Log for the days during which the boats were in company (that is up to June 9th) have been printed in a previous chapter. The following are the entries for the days June 10th to 15th, after the boats had separated, with some supplementary notes gathered from other sources.

JUNE 10.

Day begins with light S.S.W. wind, falling light towards daylight. All hands fairly cheerful but complaining of thirst, as our water ration has been reduced.

Noon.—25 deg. 40 min. S., 81 deg. 00 min. E. Course approx. N. $\frac{1}{2}$ W. Distance seventy-two miles.

Breeze freshened slightly during afternoon and boat appears to be doing better. Hope for better results to-morrow.

Everyone kept very cheerful and spirits were kept up by singing; one of the favourite songs being "Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag," while another, which was very popular and usually sung by Boatswain Sumner, was "Rolling home to dear old England." They also gave the sun a nickname, greeting him each morning by the name of "Old Jamaica."

JUNE 11.

Day begins with light wind. Anyway, we are moving, so that's something. I am getting



fed up with a rivet that is chafing my hip when steering.

Noon.—Position dead reckoning 25 deg. 12 min. S., 81 deg. 00 min. E. Course north. No sights. An oily swell.

Thought we were going to get some water, but every squall passed us by. All our feet are beginning to be very sore.

The same expedients for relieving thirst, which have been fully described in the chapters dealing with No. 1 boat, were also adopted in No. 3 boat. They included bathing the head with sea water, snuffing it up the nose, etc.

JUNE 12.

Calm all night. Expect drift to northward.

Noon.—25 deg. 00 min. S., 81 deg. 00 min. E.

Fraser wants water but cannot have it. Allchin is bucking up.

The firemen seemed to be feeling the want of water more than the other occupants of the boat, Fraser especially so, and by the evening he was unconscious. During this day a shark was sighted some distance off.

JUNE 13.

Calm again. I wish the wind would come.

Midnight.—Started pulling northward, and the crew seemed to like the exercise, but I am afraid it will take too much energy out of them.

Got a breeze, am making about N.N.W., four knots good.

Noon.—23 deg. 40 min. S., 80 deg. 33 min. E.

Wind fell light about 2 p.m., and half-an-hour later dead calm. Crew asked if they might immerse their bodies in the water. Some can swim very well.

The men who went over the side did not stay in the water very long. Fraser's condition was very bad indeed, and an attempt was made to get some milk and biscuit and water down his throat, but was unsuccessful because his mouth and tongue were too swollen.

JUNE 14.

Day begins with light variable airs, with occasional cat's paws. Fraser seems stupid and light-headed, his eyes are very deeply sunk in his head.

Got a sight to-day and found myself in 22 deg. 58 min. S. Can't understand how we have got so far north as there has been very little wind. Expect current is stronger than anticipated. Long. about 80 deg. E., I expect.

On this day the boat succeeded in getting into the track of some rain clouds, and all except Fraser, who was too far gone to benefit, got a good drink and a refreshing soaking, and cheered up a great deal in consequence.

JUNE 15.

Carried a squall for a few hours, not much rain in it. Fraser is dead.

2.50 p.m.—Lowered sail and committed his body to the deep.

4 p.m.—Breeze come. Away at last, doing about $5\frac{1}{2}$ knots.

7 p.m.—Freshening breeze and rising sea.

Progress to the northward up to this point had been disappointing. Mr. Smith had hoped to reach the trade winds before this point and was feeling very anxious at the delay, but by the 16th a run of about 164 miles had been made since the boats parted company, in a course north-west, as arranged. The wind was strong, about 6 to 7 and 8 Beaufort scale, and from the eastward of south-east, a quarter which made it a favourable wind for the boat, but great care had to be exercised in steering and in avoiding the heavy breaking seas. The boat had found the trades by the 15th, some twenty-four hours later than I did, and the weather conditions experienced had been much the same as those I had experienced in No. 1 boat.

A good deal of rain fell about this time, so that everyone was thoroughly wet, and the boat had to be baled constantly.

Chutes were made to collect the rain water as it ran off the sail and direct in into the cigarette tins. This water tasted brackish owing to the salt in the sail, but it was better than no water at all and was very welcome.

By the 17th the weather conditions were very trying, the sea was high and confused and a lot of spray was coming

aboard, so that the crew were kept busy baling, and everyone was wet through.

Two of the firemen, Joseph Abraham and John Ali, had been drinking sea water, contrary to orders, and the hardships were beginning to tell severely on some of the others. By night time Abraham was light-headed and causing trouble among the other coloured firemen.

A shark and a bo'sun bird were sighted, and by some of the men were looked upon as an evil omen.

On the next day, the 18th, the weather conditions remained much the same. The boat was making good progress and behaving well in the heavy seas in charge of Mr. Hall. Mr. Smith was ill and Seaborne was suffering from fever. Bainbridge, one of the firemen, came aft and helped with the steering, as the two apprentices, Sparks and Seaborne, were getting weak and were no longer able to lend a hand.

Joseph Abraham died during the day, while John Ali was sinking fast and died on the 19th.

By the 19th the boat was north of the latitude on which it was intended to keep steering due west (19 deg. 55 min. S.), but by the 20th the position appeared to be slightly to the southward of it. The difficulties of taking an observation in an unsteady boat in a heavy sea are, of course, very great, so that one could never be quite sure that any day's observation was really accurate, and the conditions of wind and sea made it impossible to steer an exact compass course or even keep on a course judged to approximate accuracy from the sun and stars.

The weather conditions on the 20th and the 21st were much the same as those of the preceding days, but by

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TWO VIEWS OF BEL OMBRE, MAURITIUS, WHERE NO. 3 BOAT'S CREW
LANDED

nightfall they had got so much worse that the sail had to be lowered and the boat hove to, riding to a sea anchor made of two oars lashed together. Very early in the morning of the 22nd William Barton, who had been failing for some days, died and was buried at daylight. On this day the rations of water, milk and biscuit, were reduced to half the quantity formerly served out.

By the 23rd the boat was believed to be in the vicinity of Rodriguez Island, but though a sharp look-out was kept no land was sighted, so the course was held to the westward to reach Mauritius.

During the afternoon Thomas M'Gee, seaman, died, and Sparks was very weak and light-headed.

Three blue lights were burned during the night to attract the attention of what was thought to be a steamer whose lights had been sighted, but then, as on a former occasion, the supposed light turned out to be a star rising over the horizon.

By this time all were feeling very weak and some were soaking their biscuit rations in salt water.

On the 24th the sea was still high and confused ; and it was necessary to bale the boats on more than one occasion. It was on this day that Mr. Mordecai, the second engineer, was lost overboard and drowned.

He had been sitting between the thwarts, and wished to reach his rain-catching tin during one of the squalls. The tin was on the next thwart and out of his reach as he sat, so he stood up to step over the thwart to get it. Just as he was in the act of stepping over, the boat gave a sudden and unexpected lurch, which made him lose his balance and

fall overboard between the gunwale and the foot of the sail.

First Officer Smith was himself at the tiller when the accident happened. He threw the boat into the wind, lowered the sail, and got the oars out immediately, but though Mr. Mordecai was seen to come to the surface more than once, the boat could not be brought near enough for him to be hauled in. Mordecai was wearing heavy boots and clothing, which must have hampered him a great deal, for he was a good swimmer. If it had not been for this unfortunate accident, there is no doubt that Mr. Mordecai would have been one of the survivors. He had stood the hardships very well, and was at the time one of the strongest members of the boat's crew. All the men in his boat spoke very highly of his strength and fortitude. He was of a very quiet and reserved disposition.

The number in the boat was further reduced by the death of young Henry Edward Sparks, just before sunset. Up to about a week before his death, that is to say as long as his strength lasted, Sparks had taken his turn at the helm and had helped to steer the boat.

The other apprentices, Douglas G. Bell and Eric W. T. Goddard, also took their turns at the helm regularly, and continued to do so right up to the end of the voyage.

By the 25th the sea was smooth and the boat was getting ahead well. The supply of milk was almost exhausted, but there was still enough water and biscuits left for another week. William Allchin, the cook, and Joe Baptiste, the donkeyman, were both very weak and Baptiste died on the night of the 28th, after land had been sighted.



THREE OF THE CREW OF NO. 3 BOAT TWO DAYS AFTER
LANDING AT MAURITIUS



SOUILLAC BAY, MAURITIUS

Flights of birds, which were recognised as those which usually keep near to land, were seen on various occasions about this time, and afforded great encouragement to all, and a sharp look-out was kept.

About 4 o'clock on the afternoon of the 28th, the twenty-fifth day since the abandonment of the ship, land was sighted by Mr. J. B. Edwards, the fourth engineer, and was recognised to be Mauritius from the outstanding peak of Pieter Both. A course was steered with the intention of making Port Louis on the northern coast of the island, but at sundown the wind failed, and then a slight breeze came from the north north-east, so the course could not be held and the southern part of the island had to be made for.

The night was very dark, and steering as close to the reefs as was safe, the boat worked gradually round the island, a sharp look-out being kept for an opening in the reef through which the boat could be steered to land. Though the swell in the open sea appeared to be only moderate, the seas were breaking on the reefs with tremendous noise and force.

About 2 a.m. the boat was taken close in to within a quarter of a mile of the beach, rounded to and anchored, and it seemed at first as though a landing would be possible; then a great sea, followed soon after by another, swept under the boat and broke about twenty yards astern, making it evident that the position was a dangerous one, so a suitable opportunity between the seas being seized, the sail was hoisted, the anchor cut adrift and the boat put to sea again, and continued along the coast until daylight. Just before daylight a fishing boat belonging to the island was sighted

and hailed, but made off, a proceeding which caused surprise and disappointment until it was learned later that the men in her were probably frightened by a story of an apparition which is said to appear in that locality.

About 7 a.m. a gap between the reefs was found, and the boat was proceeding towards it when another fishing boat with two men on board was seen to be coming out. This boat was hailed and asked for water, but had none on board, but one of its occupants went on board the lifeboat and piloted it through the reef.

The landing was made on the Bel Ombre estate in the Baie du Cap.

Several of the crew were too weak to walk and had to be carried ashore and to the hospital, where William J. Allchin, the cook, unfortunately died.

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A NATIVE HUT, RODRIGUEZ ISLAND



THE HOSPITAL, RODRIGUEZ ISLAND

XII

RODRIGUEZ ISLAND. MAURITIUS

THE distances covered by the two boats to reach the respective destinations were: No. 1 boat, 1556 miles to Rodriguez Island, and No. 3 boat, 1747 miles to Mauritius. These distances were covered in the case of No. 1 boat in 22 days 19 hours, and in the case of No. 3 boat in 24 days 20 hours, but No. 3 boat's crew did not land until twelve hours later, as they were unable to find a passage or a pilot to take them through the reef.

Had we been able to save the chronometers we could have shaped a direct course, and had the wind permitted us to keep to that course the distance to be covered in order to reach Rodriguez would have been about 1330 miles, which is considerably less than the distance we actually traversed.

Our first night spent ashore on Rodriguez Island will never be forgotten by any of us. One would have imagined that we only needed a dry, warm bed to send us immediately off to sleep and to keep us asleep for an indefinite number of hours, but the effect on us was exactly the reverse. We were actually more wide-awake than ever, and chatted for a considerable time after we had turned in. Then we decided

to keep quite quiet for about an hour, thinking that by so doing we might perhaps be induced to drop asleep, but it was no use and at length we gave up the idea. Evidently the transition from the hard seats and the constant wet and banging about in the boat to a dry and comfortable bed was too sudden, and it is possible we should have slept better if we had camped on the floor that night.

Our chatter roused Mr. Hanning from his slumbers in the early hours of the morning of the 27th, and we were very pleased to see him appear with a supply of tea. We then gave up all idea of sleep and just lay and talked till everyone was up and about. Baths were then prepared, and we thoroughly enjoyed the luxurious comfort of sitting and soaking the salt out of our skins. While these baths were being got ready, I received a visit from R. H. James and Michael Scully, who had recovered sufficiently to be about, and were anxious to know how it fared with me.

Our clothes, which were stiff with salt, had been taken away to have the salt washed out of them, and for the time being we were clad in military hospital clothes, but our own clothes soon dried in the heat of the tropical sun, and after our bath and a few minutes agony in the hands of the barber, we dressed, and accompanied by Mr. Robson, I called on the others in the house near the doctor's, which was not far away, and found them all very comfortable and jolly. From there we went on to visit those in hospital, whom we found quite bright, and we saw that there was every hope of their speedy recovery.

It was a strange coincidence that two of the men I met on this island were natives of the town of St. Ives, Cornwall,

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H.M.S. "COLOMBO"



H.M.S. "COLOMBO" AND R.M.S. "GOORKHA" AT MAURITIUS

which was the registered port of the s.s. "Trevessa," and though I had never come across either of them before, the relatives of both were well known to me. The father of one of them is in command of another steamer belonging to the Hain Steamship Company, to which line the "Trevessa" belonged, and the other is a near relative of an old shipmate and great personal friend of mine, whose acquaintance I had first made when I joined the firm twenty-one years previously. Another similar coincidence was discovered when Mrs. Crouch, the wife of one of the staff of the Eastern Telegraph Company, recognised the steward as belonging to her native town of Penarth.

In the course of the day we learned, to our great relief, that news of our safety had reached home. Messages and enquiries came pouring in, and we were very grateful for the kindness and thoughtfulness of Lord Inchcape in arranging that all messages to our friends and relatives should be sent free of charge. The officials of the Eastern Telegraph Company immediately placed all their organisation at my disposal to send these messages through, and to enable this to be done the Company diverted a great deal of traffic to its new alternative route, the Seychelles-Aden cable. Rodriguez is one of the links on the Australian cable between Durban and Perth, West Australia. At all hours of the day and night I continued to receive and send messages, and this went on until the 28th, when it was arranged that I should not be disturbed during the night except in the case of an urgent message.

On June 28 we heard that H.M.S. "Colombo," which had been lying at Mauritius, was speeding along to our

assistance, and some hours later she arrived. To expedite matters and to ensure that she could proceed with the search for No. 3 boat without any loss of time, I went off to her and boarded her soon after she anchored. I gave Captain Wolfe-Murray particulars of the route I had arranged with Mr. Smith to follow in order to reach land, as well as of the weather conditions I had met with a few days previously, so that he could judge what would be best to do in his search for the other boat. Our own safety and the knowledge of what we had had to go through made us all the more eager to hear of the safety of the other boat's crew. A quantity of clothing had been hurriedly got together at Mauritius, and was brought along by H.M.S. "Colombo," and was very acceptable and very badly needed.

The first intimation I received that No. 3 boat had reached land was a telephone message from the telegraph station, which arrived on the morning of the 29th, and the news was passed round to the others as quickly as possible. The excitement was intense, and the delight of all eclipsed that which was manifested when we first sighted land. They asked all sorts of questions, but at the time I had only the bare news that the boat had arrived and no further particulars or names of survivors. In the afternoon I stood by with the officers at the Eastern Telegraph Company's station, anxiously awaiting a reply to a message I had sent asking for the names of those who had reached safety. The joy with which the names were received was dimmed when it was known that so many had failed to come through.

The news of the arrival of the second boat was broadcast by one of the Clan liners in Mauritius harbour, and

later that day we received the news that H.M.S. "Colombo" was returning to Rodriguez to take us on board for Mauritius.

The island of Rodriguez is a beautiful place (no doubt we saw it through rose-coloured spectacles), and it appealed to us especially after our trying experience, and owing to the kindness we received there; anyhow, the conditions could not have been better for our speedy recovery, and it seemed but a poor return for the generous care that had been given us day and night that we were so anxious to get on the move; but we were now eager to meet the survivors from the second boat. Had it not been for this wish, and for the fact that there would be no other steamer calling at the island for some months (the "Secunder" had already sailed for Mauritius), we should have been delighted to remain on this beautiful outpost of the Empire to recover fully, and the kindness of the inhabitants will always be remembered by us with deepest gratitude. It says much for the care and attention we received that all of us were fit and able to be about so soon.

H.M.S. "Colombo" arrived in the early morning of June 30, and anchored outside the reef. The Rev. Mr. Silarsah had arranged to hold a thanksgiving service on that morning before we left, and the hour for it was advanced slightly as H.M.S. "Colombo" wished to sail again at noon. The little church on the island was packed to its utmost capacity, and the service fittingly terminated with the singing of the National Anthem. We then passed from the church to the jetty, escorted by our new friends, and there was a wonderful scene there as they wished us goodbye before we embarked in the boats that were waiting to

take us off to the "Colombo." We left among the ringing cheers of the population.

The boats soon sailed us out to the "Colombo," which was anchored some distance from the shore, and another great reception awaited us on board. Our crew were divided amongst the various messes, as all in the ship wanted to have some share in taking care of us, and we were soon comfortably settled and at home in our new quarters.

That night a concert was arranged on board in our honour, which we all thoroughly enjoyed, and I then learnt that when the news of our arrival at Rodriguez reached Mauritius and H.M.S. "Colombo" was ordered to proceed to our assistance, the crew were so eager to do everything possible to hasten matters that the ship was fuelled, provisioned and prepared for sea in record time.

Everything possible was done for our comfort while we were on board her; the time passed all too quickly and we were sorry to leave her on our arrival next day at Mauritius.

We received a royal welcome from the steamers in Port Louis, Mauritius harbour, as the "Colombo" entered on 1st July, and a tremendous ovation from the crowd of people who had gathered to meet us. The first to greet us was Mr. Brodie, agent for the Hain Steamship Company, and we were soon ashore making the acquaintance of another circle of friends. As it was not known what our condition would be on arrival, no arrangements for our accommodation had been made. However, all were soon comfortably housed and receiving every attention.

Our enthusiasm at the prospect of meeting the other

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H.M.S. " COLOMBO " OFF PORT MATHURIN, RODRIGUEZ



SURVIVORS ON R.M.S. " GOORKHA "

boat's crew was dimmed on hearing the news that William Allchin, the cook, had died after landing.

By the time all the necessary arrangements for our accommodation had been made, it was too late for any of us to visit the other boat's crew that day, but we were assured that they were getting along all right, and were in hospital on the Bel Ombre estate, which was over forty miles away. Next morning, with Mr. Robson, I made the journey. All were as delighted to see us as we were to see them. They had been told that we were coming and were eagerly awaiting our arrival, and many were the questions we had to answer with regard to the condition of our boat's crew. They seemed to be surrounded by quantities of delicacies which people had sent along for them, and there were any number of willing nurses to attend to their welfare.

We stayed with them for a couple of hours and saw that everything had been done that could be done.

In the meantime an offer, kindly made by Col. M'Kechnie, O.C. troops, to place the military hospital at Vacaos at the disposal of our men, had been accepted. The hospital at Bel Ombre, in which the men were housed, was a temporary one on a sugar estate, while Vacaos is situated higher up on the island in a beautiful and very healthy spot, which offered better conditions for a speedy recovery.

We could not have chosen a better spot to recuperate than either of these islands, and we certainly could not have found kinder friends. The islands are amongst the most beautiful I have ever visited, and the upper part of the island of Mauritius is bracing and invigorating. While we were there we all found that we were growing new finger

nails. A thick ridge appeared just by the moons, and this gradually worked up, and in about three months we had completely new finger nails.

While Mr. Robson and I paid the visit to the crew of No. 3 boat at Bel Ombre, the rest of my boat's crew, with the exception of three who were put in hospital at Port Louis, and the natives who were being cared for in the Sailors' Home, had been accommodated at the military camp, in quarters apart from the troops. It was thought better that all should be kept under medical supervision for some time.

Next day, 3rd July, all but two of No. 3 boat's crew, Chief Officer Smith and Sherzang Sherdal, fireman, were brought in from Bel Ombre and placed with the others at the military camp. On this day also it was our sad duty to attend the funeral of the cook, William Allchin. He was buried at Phoenix Cemetery with naval and military honours. The service was conducted by the Bishop of Mauritius, the Rev. Golding-Bird, and the cathedral was packed. In addition to the detachments from H.M.S. "Colombo" and the military forces on the island, all those who were off duty attended the funeral, and very many of the civilian population of the island were also there.

On 4th July the remaining two members of No. 3 boat's crew were brought from Bel Ombre to Vacaos. Everywhere on the island we were received with open arms. As day by day different members of the crew became well enough to leave the military quarters, they were received into various houses where they were treated as members of the family. Looking back now upon events in Mauritius, I do not know

how we managed to keep up under the honours that were showered on us while we were there. Every section of the community was anxious to have its share in entertaining us ; dinner, dances, etc., were arranged for us by the military, the navy, the Eastern Telegraph Company's staff, and by the civilian population. As a matter of fact, I had to give in and cancel all my social engagements for the last three or four days of our stay on the island. On most days I had to travel to Port Louis, and was there all day on ship's business, making statements and so on, and there were worries in connection with the lives that had been lost and with the inquiry that was to be held at Mauritius.

On 11th July a combined thanksgiving and memorial service was held in St. James' Cathedral. There was a large attendance, representative of the various classes of the community of the island.

His Excellency the Governor and his A.D.C. were present, while the army and navy were represented by Col. M'Kechnie, Capt. Wolfe-Murray, R.N., and a number of officers and men of these two services. The Colonial Secretary and other high officials of the Civil Service, the French consul and Mr. Brodie also attended, and the Boy Scouts were represented by their section leaders.

The police band was in the cathedral and played a processional march, while the bishop and clergy proceeded up the main aisle, and altogether the service was a most impressive one. The admirable address of the bishop, with the oft-repeated words of the well-known hymn, "Eternal Father strong to save," and his farewell words, stirred the hearts of us all, who had such special reason

to be thankful for the way in which Providence had watched over us. The service was concluded by the band playing the "Dead March" in Saul, followed by the sounding of the Last Post.

In the yard of the cathedral, after the conclusion of the service, I presented each of the members of the crew personally to His Excellency the Governor. His Excellency shook hands with each of the officers and men, and addressed us in the following words :—

" I would like to tell you how proud I am to have been able to shake hands with you all, and I desire to convey to you the hearty congratulations of the Government and the people of this colony on your miraculous escape.

" We are full of admiration for the splendid way you have upheld the finest traditions of British sailors, and for the wonderful pluck and endurance which you showed during your terrible experiences. I beg you will accept our heartiest good wishes for good luck and happiness wherever you may be in the future."

A thanksgiving and memorial service was also held earlier on the same morning at the Roman Catholic Cathedral of St. Louis, which was also largely attended.

The people of Mauritius were not content with extending their hospitality to and lavishing their care upon us, but also started a fund and raised a considerable sum, which was divided among the crew and the dependants of those who lost their lives.

Two photographs of all the survivors, together with the bishop and Mr. Brodie, were taken immediately after

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OFFICERS AND CREW, AFTER THE THANKSGIVING SERVICE AT MAURITIUS

the thanksgiving service, and a copy of each was presented to each man. One of these photographs, with the names of all the men inscribed upon it, was presented by Col. M'Kechnie, O.C. troops, as a souvenir of the event, and as a memento of our stay on the island ; the other was presented by the civil population through Mr. Brodie.

We remained at Mauritius for sixteen days in all, waiting for a homeward bound vessel, and this gave ample time for all the crew to recover sufficiently to embark for home. Mr. Brodie, agent for the Hain Steamship Company, with whom I stayed, was untiring in his efforts for our welfare, and received every assistance from those round, who were only too anxious to be allowed to do something that would make our stay a really memorable one.

An inquiry into the circumstances attending the loss of the "Trevessa" was held at Mauritius, and the following is a copy of its report :—

" Finding of the Marine Court of Mauritius in the matter of the Inquiry held on the 12th July, 1923, into the circumstances attending the loss of the s.s. "Trevessa," in latitude 28.50 south, and longitude 85.45 east, on the 4th June, 1923.

" The Court is composed of

- (1) E. Rouillard, Esq., District Magistrate of Port Louis, I. Division, President.
- (2) Capt. Murdoch MacDonald, Marine Surveyor, Assessor.
- (3) Captain George Owens, Master of the s.s. "Goorkha," Assessor.

"The Court finds that the British steamer "Trevessa" foundered on the 4th June, 1923, in 28.50 south and 85.45 east, during a heavy S.S.W. gale, through a serious leak in hold No. 1.

"The pumps were in good condition, but apparently the nature of the cargo prevented the water finding its way to the pumps.

"We find that the master and the crew did everything they could to save the ship, and only abandoned her in time to save life.

"We desire to express our admiration of the seamanship and discipline displayed by master, officers and crew in their long and arduous boat voyage to the Mauritius Group of Islands, and also express our sympathy to the relatives of those who succumbed to the hardships experienced.

(Signed)

{ M. M'DONALD,
Assessor.
GEORGE OWENS,
Master s.s. "Goorkha,"
Assessor.
E. ROUILlard,
President."

XIII

THE VOYAGE HOME

ON 16th July we embarked on R.M.S. "Goorkha" of the Union Castle Line, and, full of regrets at parting with our many friends, and amid scenes of unbounded enthusiasm, we found ourselves again treading a ship's deck, bound for home. Capt. George Owens of the "Goorkha" was one of the finest men I have ever met, and thanks to his kindness and consideration for us all, we had a most enjoyable trip home.

All the survivors of the "Trevessa" were with me, with the exception of Tom Patchoo, Ali Nagi and Mount Lee, coloured firemen, who remained behind to await the arrival of one of the British India Company's steamers, to take them by a more direct route to their homes. A few days later they left for Colombo, and from there Ali Nagi proceeded by the first available steamer to Aden, and Tom Patchoo and Mount Lee to Rangoon, Burma.

Our first port of call was Durban, which we reached on Sunday, 22nd July. News of our being on the "Goorkha" had not preceded us, so we had a quiet time, and as the day was Sunday there were not many people about, and we had a restful day, for which we were very thankful. Next day, however, we were besieged by pressmen.

We only remained at Durban for a few days, and just as we were leaving I had a very great surprise. While the crew of the "Goorkha" were at stations, and those off duty and the passengers were on deck watching the ship leaving port, I was called by one of my crew into the saloon, where I found all the crew of the "Trevessa" assembled. Mr. Robson, chief engineer, on behalf of the officers and crew, then presented me with a gold cigarette case.

To say I was dumbfounded is putting it mildly. I cannot describe the scene, and would rather not attempt to. Mr. Robson, who was chosen to make the presentation, broke down, and I was on the verge of doing so and could scarcely make any reply at all, but I shall cherish that cigarette case as long as I live as one of my most treasured possessions.

Our next stop was at Cape Town, and here again our stay was short. We were besieged by pressmen again, but as in Durban, I spent most of the time ashore, and so escaped numerous interviews.

From Cape Town we had a long run in front of us before our next stop, which was at Las Palmas, Canary Islands, where our call made just a little break in the voyage, as we left again the same day. The voyage home was quite uneventful, though it could not be said to be monotonous, and here again we made a large circle of friends amongst the passengers and ship's company, who did everything possible to make the time a very pleasant one indeed. While at sea we received various congratulatory wireless messages from other steamers, and, as we neared home, also from shore stations. Among the latter was a message



CAPTAIN FOSTER GREETED BY MR. HAVELOCK WILSON, M.P.

inviting us to a luncheon given by the Seafarers' Joint Council. We had a most enjoyable trip, but nevertheless were very anxious to get home.

When the "Goorkha" approached Gravesend early on the morning of Thursday, the 23rd August, all the vessels there were dressed with flags and blowing their syrens. We were very much surprised at the reception which awaited us, and for some time we did not realise that the display was on our account, one of the men remarking: "There must be something up in London to-day." Below Gravesend we were met by the launch "Peter Wright," belonging to the Joint Seafarers' Council, an organisation representing every section of the men employed in the Mercantile Marine; and on the launch were many relatives of the officers and men of the "Trevessa," as well as others who had come to give us a welcome home, but unfortunately my wife was too ill to be among them.

The "Goorkha" anchored off Tilbury, and I was soon busily engaged with the Marine Superintendent of the Hain Steamship Company, Capt. Uren, and their legal representative, and it was not long before we left the "Goorkha" for the shore.

The business that had occupied me was the reporting to the owner's representative and preparing for the discharge of the crew who had come home with me, for though the ship had been lost in the Indian Ocean, the men were still on her books until formally discharged at Tilbury.

Tom Patchoo, Ali Nagi and Mount Lee, all firemen, had remained behind at Mauritius, but all the others had to be dealt with.

As soon as all my business was completed the survivors of the "Trevessa" crossed the river to Gravesend, where we were entertained at the luncheon arranged by the Joint Seafarers' Council, the invitation to which we had received while still at sea.

Mr. J. Havelock Wilson, C.B.E., the President of the Joint Seafarers' Council, was in the chair, and among those present to welcome us were: Mr. Alderman W. Evan Thomas, Mayor of Gravesend; Mr. Read and Mr. Insoll, directors of the Hain Steamship Company, the owners of the "Trevessa," and Captain Uren, their marine superintendent; Mr. T. W. Moore, C.B.E., of the Imperial Merchant Service Guild; Captain Davies of Swansea, representing the United Kingdom Pilots' Association; and Mr. Matthew Tearle, O.B.E., Secretary of the Seamen's and Firemen's Union, and other seamen's representatives from all over the country.

This reception touched us very much, and was particularly gratifying, for it is perhaps only seamen who can really understand what we had been through, and recognition by those who have the intimate knowledge is, when all is said and done, that which is best worth having.

After the luncheon, the men proceeded to the Tilbury Board of Trade office, where they were all discharged from the ship's articles, and were then at liberty to proceed to their homes.

The following morning, with Mr. Smith and Mr. Robson, I met the directors of the Hain Steamship Company at their office, and they presented me with a beautiful silver tea tray, Mr. Smith with a silver rose bowl, and Mr. Robson

with a silver inkstand, each with an inscription commemorating our recent boat voyage, gifts which were greatly appreciated by us.

On 15th January, 1924, Mr. Smith and I received the greatest honour possible for a citizen of the British Empire ; we were received by Their Majesties The King and Queen at Buckingham Palace. Although we had looked forward to this visit with no little trepidation, His Majesty with his kindly manner soon put us at ease. Their Majesties showed that they were fully cognisant with the details of our trip, and seemed greatly interested in our personal account. The King asked many questions and showed that he had a thorough practical knowledge of the difficulties and dangers we had to contend with in seamanship and navigation, and also of the physical hardships we had to endure through our cramped position and lack of food, and congratulated us very heartily on our success in coming through.

On 18th January we were called upon to attend at the Board of Trade offices, Westminster, where, in the presence of a large, distinguished and representative gathering, Sir Philip Lloyd-Graeme, on behalf of the Board of Trade, presented me with a silver tea service and Mr. Smith with a silver inkstand.

My boat, No. 1, was purchased by the Anglo-Ceylon Estates Company, Limited, of Mauritius, who brought it to England, and it has been set up in the grounds of the Ceylon Court of the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley.

Looking back, it seems impossible to realise fully how we came safely through such an ordeal, and it is a wonder

that we managed to keep our spirits up as we did, and continue hopeful during those weary days. As far as my own personal feelings went, never for one moment did I give up hope and think that we should fail to reach land. From the first I tried to instil my optimistic spirit into the rest of the crew, and I think I succeeded. They were a wonderful crowd, and were only too willing to trust to my guidance.

To begin with we all shared the hope that one of the searching steamers would find us. This hope I encouraged long after I myself had given up the idea of rescue by another vessel.

The course steered for the first few days was what I considered would be the likely course to meet with any vessels making a search for us. I did not think it prudent to remain on the spot, drifting, and awaiting assistance, as the circumstances were all against it—we were in mid-ocean, with a rather scanty supply of provisions and water, and would probably drift further out of position for rescuing steamers than if we shaped a course for a definite objective.

As time went on there were discussions as to the possibility of rescue by vessels, steam or sail, and when the hope of any searching vessel finding us had gone, I encouraged the crew to hope for rescue by a sailing vessel bound to or from the Indies round the Cape of Good Hope. As we got nearer the islands a look-out was kept for steamers going north or south. I pointed out that if we passed the islands, the further we got to the westward the greater became our chance of being picked up. Every hope in this way was



CAPTAIN FOSTER AND FIRST OFFICER SMITH AT GRAVESEND

encouraged, and the subject was discussed until threadbare, though personally I did not think much of our chances in this direction. By the time we were in the track of the steamers we should have been near enough to Madagascar to make the difference to us just a question of hours.

Throughout the last few days the nerve strain was terrible, but we did not allow ourselves to think of anything except that we had to get in and do it as quickly as possible. Rodriguez Island had to be made to get the majority of men in alive and in good health.

That last week is one I should not like to go through again. We were all very weak, but there could be no question of increasing the rations. If we missed the islands of the Mauritius group there would barely be enough left to carry us through to the larger island of Madagascar on the same rations, even allowing for a depletion of the crew, due to there being some who could not have survived the further distance.

During these last days sometimes one, sometimes another, would get a bit pessimistic and say he could not last much longer. I used to tell them that I intended to get in and that it was up to them to stick it out, and that was sufficient ; and as events proved, we reached the island of Rodriguez in a healthy condition, though very weak.

Every man had to do his bit and do it to the limit of his strength and capacity. Every man was "all out," both mentally and physically, and those who were better equipped than the others in either or both ways never hinted that they might be doing more than their share when they were called upon to exert their powers to the utmost.

If I had known that I was going to be called upon to make this boat voyage I could not have picked a better crew for the purpose, with just a few exceptions. I could not have more loyal support, and I am proud to count them all as my friends.

APPENDIX

THE BOARD OF TRADE INQUIRY

A SECOND inquiry into the circumstances attending the loss of the "Trevessa" was held in London by the direction of the Board of Trade. It met for the first time in Court "A," Judges Quadrangle, Royal Courts of Justice, on 15th November, 1923, and lasted ten days. Mr. H. W. Disney sat as Wreck Commissioner, and with him were Captain D. Davies, a Younger Brother of Trinity House, Mr. J. McLaren and Mr. A. D. Younger, as nautical assessors. Ten questions were put to the Court by counsel for the Board of Trade and were duly answered by the Court, of which the following is the judgment:—

"The Court having carefully inquired into the circumstances attending the casualty, finds for the reasons stated in the Annex hereto, that the British steamship 'Trevessa' foundered during a heavy S.S.W. gale on June 4, 1923, in lat. 28.45 S. and long. 85.42 E., through springing a leak, which admitted water rapidly into the ship and filled No. 1 hold. There is no direct evidence to justify a positive finding as to the cause of that leak, but the Court is strongly of opinion that owing to the nature of the cargo and the severe weather she experienced the ship was subjected to

continuous excessive straining, which caused a seam or seams to open in the shell plating on one or both sides.

"No. 1 hold was loaded in such a manner that water entering the hold could not reach the bilges or be dealt with by the pumps. This manner of loading created a serious element of danger to the ship, but it has been so general for so many years that in the absence of evidence of any negligence the Court does not consider any individual to blame for following what was an established practice.

"The Court is of opinion that it is possible to eliminate this element of danger to a great extent, but it is not within the scope of its duty to suggest means by which this result can be attained. The Court does, however, venture to suggest that the Board of Trade should institute some inquiry to examine the matter and ascertain whether this danger can be avoided, with due regard to all mechanical, economic and practical considerations.

"The boats were sound, efficient, and properly equipped, and every possible effort was made by the officers to save the lives of the crew. In spite of their efforts, however, eleven lives were unhappily lost. The Court is unable to find words adequately to express its members' admiration of the fine seamanship and resolution of the officers, the splendid discipline and courage of the crew, both European and non-European. The Court desires to express deep sympathy with the relatives of those who lost their lives."



PRESENTATION BY SIR PHILIP LLOYD-GRAEME AT THE BOARD OF TRADE

THE ANNEX

Question 1. On arrival at Port Pirie on or about May 1 was the "Trevessa" in good and seaworthy condition as regards hull and equipment?

Answer. On arrival at Port Pirie on or about May 1 the "Trevessa" was in good and seaworthy condition as regards hull and equipment.

Question 2. Were the holds of the vessel properly prepared at Port Pirie for the reception of the cargo before it was shipped? What defects, if any, were found in the hull of the ship at Port Pirie? Were they properly repaired, and were such repairs inspected and passed by a responsible person before loading commenced?

Answer. Before the cargo was shipped the holds of the vessel were properly prepared at Port Pirie for the reception of cargo intended to be stowed in the manner this cargo was stowed, which was in accordance with the practice at Port Pirie for cargoes of this nature. On arrival at Port Pirie, while preparing No. 1 hold for cargo, a number of rivets on the port side, about 10 or 12 feet up from the turn of the bilge and a few feet aft from the forepeak bulkhead, were found to be weeping slightly. This defect was very slight and was satisfactorily dealt with by fitting a cement box over the space affected. The work was subsequently passed as satisfactory by Captain A. M. Mars in his capacity as a Lloyd's Register surveyor.

Question 3. What was the amount and description of cargo shipped on board the "Trevessa" at Port Pirie in

May last? Was the cargo properly stowed and secured from shifting? Were the weights of the cargo stowed in the various holds or compartments so distributed as to make the vessel easy in a sea way?

Answer. The "Trevessa" loaded a full cargo of zinc concentrates, amounting in all to 6564 tons, at Port Pirie in May last. The cargo was properly secured from shifting, but it was not properly stowed, inasmuch as it was stowed, as described in the answer to Question 6, in a manner which created a serious element of danger to the ship. This manner of loading, however, has been in general use for many years, and in the absence of any evidence of negligence, the Court is unable to say that blame attaches to any person. The Court is satisfied from the evidence that until June 3, 1923, the ship was easy in a sea way, and that she behaved well in all weathers, and the Court is unable to say that any different distribution of the cargo would have caused the ship to be easier.

Question 4. Did the vessel take the ground while loading at Port Pirie? If so, was she strained or damaged thereby?

Answer. The vessel did take the ground while loading at the wharf at Port Pirie. She was not strained or damaged thereby.

Question 5. What amount of bunker coal did the vessel carry? Where was it stowed?

Answer. The vessel called at Fremantle for bunkers and took on board there from 360 to 400 tons. She left that port with about 980 tons total bunkers. This was stowed partly in a cross bunker at the after end of No. 2 hold and partly in the permanent bunkers.

Question 6. On leaving Port Pirie on May 15 (a) What was the vessel's draught of water and freeboard? (b) Had the vessel the freeboard required for a summer voyage? (c) As loaded, were the arrangements on board such as to enable the pumps to deal effectively with the water which was made in the holds or compartments in which the cargo was stowed?

Answer. (a) On leaving Port Pirie on May 15 last the "Trevessa's" mean draught of water was 25 feet 1 inch, and her freeboard was 6 feet $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches. (b) The vessel had the freeboard required for a summer voyage. (c) The cargo was composed of a substance of high specific gravity which was almost impermeable by water. It was loaded in such a manner as to convert each hold into a compartment which was for all practical purposes watertight. Owing to this arrangement, water entering a hold could not escape to the bilges, and its presence could not be ascertained by sounding. The pumps were therefore unable to deal with the water, if any were made in the holds or compartments in which the cargo was stowed. If water entering a hold through a leak could have reached the sounding pipes, the officers would probably have discovered such water soon after it began to enter. In that case opportunity might have been given to enter the hold and deal with the leak before it had become so serious that in no event could the pumps have kept pace with the inflow or kept the water down.

Question 7. What was the cause of the vessel making water in No. 1 hold on the night of June 3? Was every effort made to keep the water under and to save the vessel?

Answer. There is no positive evidence as to what was the cause of the vessel making water in No. 1 hold on the night of June 3 last, but the Court is of opinion that, owing to the nature of the cargo and the severe weather she experienced, the ship was subjected to continuous excessive straining which caused a seam or seams to open in the shell plating on one or on both sides. Every effort was made to keep the water under and to save the vessel.

Question 8. What was the cause of the loss of the "Trevessa"?

Answer. The cause of the loss of the "Trevessa" was loss of buoyancy due to the inflow of water into No. 1 hold, causing the ship to sink by the head.

Question 9. Was the vessel supplied with the boats and life-saving appliances required by the Merchant Shipping Act and Rules? Were the boats in which the crew left the ship equipped with all the requisites required by the rules? Were the water breakers for each boat full of water? Was the mast of each boat properly fitted and strong enough to carry a sail?

Answer. The vessel was supplied with the boats and life-saving appliances required by the Merchant Shipping Act and Rules. The boats in which the crew left the ship were equipped with all the requisites required by the rules. The water breakers in each boat were not quite full, owing to evaporation, but as breakers were taken from other boats which went down with the ship, the total amount of water carried in each of the three boats which left the ship was greatly in excess of that required by the rules. The mast of each ship was properly fitted, and strong enough to carry

a sail. A slight accident happened to the step of the mast of the master's boat, but it was soon rectified, and the mast proved efficient for the rest of the long voyage.

Question 10. How many lives were lost subsequent to the abandonment of the vessel? What was the cause of such loss of life?

Answer. Eleven lives were lost subsequent to the abandonment of the vessel, two from the master's boat, and nine from the chief officer's boat. The two who lost their lives in the master's boat died from exposure and exhaustion. One, David John Mordecai, second engineer, fell overboard from the chief officer's boat in bad weather, about sixteen days after the sinking of the ship, and it was found impossible to save him. Seven men died in this boat from exposure and exhaustion, and one, William S. Allchin, the ship's cook, died from the same cause soon after the boat arrived at Mauritius. In a few cases death was probably accelerated by the drinking of salt water.

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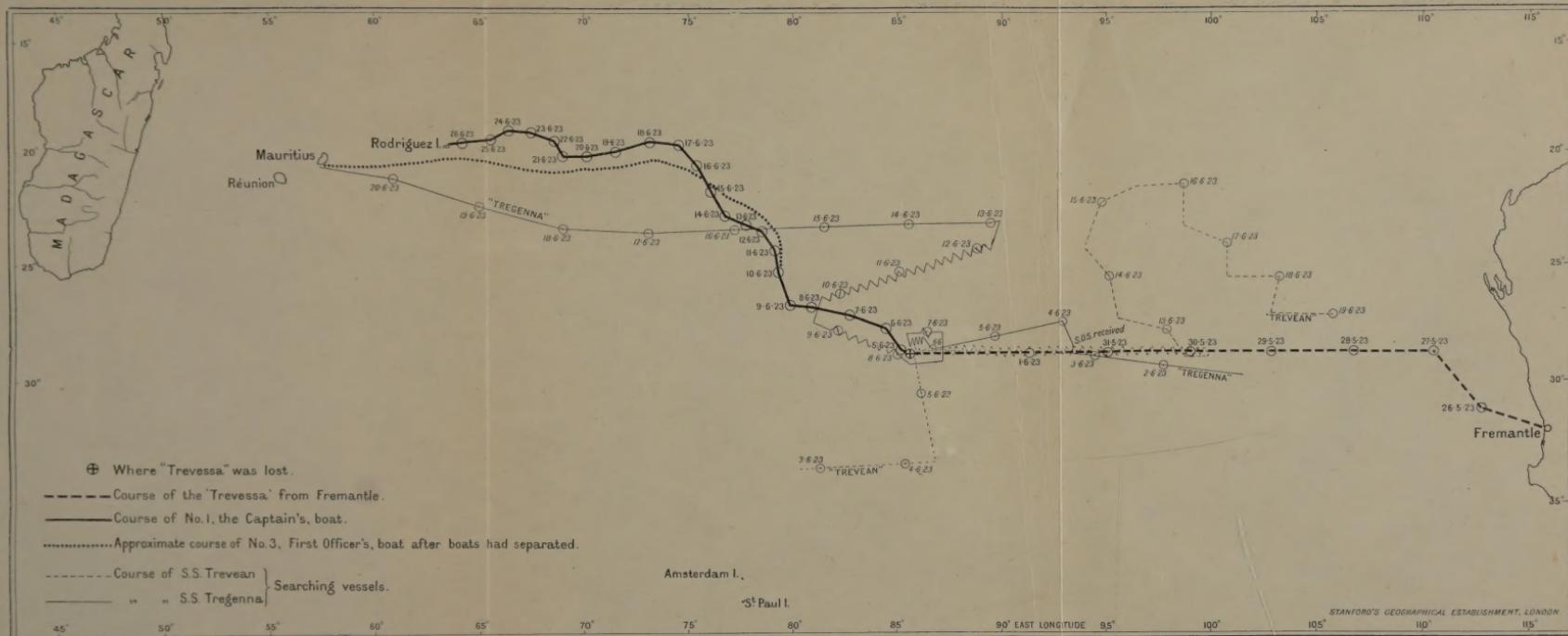
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